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A Translation and Critical Analysis of Sections I and II  
of Moses Mendelssohn's Introduction to His  
Commentary ("*Bi'ur*") on the Pentateuch  
As Well As the Part of the Genesis Commentary  
Written by Himself

David Fox Sandmel

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Corrigenda

<u>Page</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Error</u>	<u>Correction</u>
3	4	Israel" Deut. 34:12 .	Israel." Deut. 34:12
3	13	\$croll'(Jer. 36:18).	scroll.' (Jer. 36:18)"
3	16	tear.	tear."
6	20	Law..'	Law...'
7	17	[Deut. 31:21].	[Deut. 31:21]
9	15	script.These	script. These
10	15	and and did	and did
12	18	God [Ps. 139:17]'" .	God.' [Ps. 139:17]"
13	3	Salnika	Salonika
15	20	transmitted to	transmitted them to
17	21	<u>schlange</u> .""	<u>schlange</u> ."
21	22	[meaning of]	[meaning of the]
32	20	circles)?	circles?
33	4	amd	and
39	21	memories. In	memories, in
48	22	and the	and they
51	1	synonamous	synonymous
51	7	synonamous	synonymous
57	22	liar.	liar."
58	23	the of Israel	the people of Israel
61	11	except in	except
70	6	me'.	me.'
75	21	not e	not be
76	20	satisfactorily".	satisfactorily."
76	22	etc.". .	etc."
77	16	king".	king."
80	15	version was	version were
88	17	with out	without
92	15	the for	for
93	11	or two	or to
94	22	thses	these
104	13	<u>worden</u> ".	<u>worden</u> ."
109	2	<u>vernacular</u> ".	<u>vernacular</u> ."
110	1	etc...".	etc..."
114	7	the pointed	they pointed
114	23	end".	end."
115	15	good".	good."
116	9	good".	good."
118	15	region".	region."
118	21	"morning",	"morning,"
120	11	King".	King."
122	2	heavens".	heavens."
122	21	prersent	present
125	18	"seed".	"seed."
127	4	eating" [ <u>ets ma'akhall</u> ],	eating [ <u>ets ma'akhall</u> ],"
127	23	kind".	kind."
130	23	"swarming	"swarming
132	11	also,	also.

Corrigenda (continued)

<u>Page</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Error</u>	<u>Correction</u>
146	20	[wayekhusu],	[wayekhusu],"
146	21	[nishlemu].	[nishlemu]."
148	24	came..	came."
150	17	meditae	meditate
151	4	[mila'asot]'. .	[mila'asot].'
154	17	prophets.	prophets,
165	24	GRAOUND	GROUND
171	13	As is	As it
178	11	regad	regard
179	17	Kimchi	Kimbi
186	22	bejold	behold
186	23	,an	man
188	24	have be	have been
189	4	Rabba	Rabbah
195	19	which have	which has
198	16	dminishing	deminishing
204	22	suddenly.	suddenly."
206	7	dissapears	disappears
211	22	Goh.	Qoh.
213	1	it not	it does not
214	19	spicific	specific
215	15	maay	may
225	24	"You	'You
232	8	[i.E.	i.e.
234	10	[ch. 22†	[ch. 22]
240	10	at what	that
242	3	fir	for
245	23	sentence	sentences
246	8	hin	him
255	19	will"	will."
258	19	way.	way."
264	15	on the "	on the <u>Bi'ur</u> "
267	14	Mendelsohn	<u>Mendelssohn</u>
273	21	The is	This is the
275	5	copyests	copyists
291	22	(Nahmanides)	(Nachmanides)

## Digest

The first part of Moses Mendelssohn's introduction to his commentary on the Pentateuch deals with the history of the transmission of the biblical text and the problems associated with it. The second section includes a history of Jewish bible translations from Onkelos to Mendelssohn, and Mendelssohn's account of the growth of this project among the Berlin Maskils. His comments on *Parashat Bereshit* reveal both his exegetic method and concern with producing an accurate translation. In addition, in the commentary Mendelssohn is seen to be the strict traditionalist which he really was, a fact which later generations have tended to overlook. The critique draws together much of what has been written about the *Bi'ur* and assesses its place in Jewish literature and biblical studies.

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## Preface

The following pages contain a translation of part of the commentary, commonly known as the *Bi'ur*, which Moses Mendelssohn wrote to accompany his German translation of the Torah, published 1780-1783.

Two sections of the Introduction, called *Or Lintivah* are included in this translation. The opening section is untitled; it deals, for the most part, with the chain of Biblical tradition. Two points are stressed in this section: the Torah is the direct word of God, dictated in Hebrew to Moses on Mt. Sinai, and the text which we have today has been faithfully preserved for us at least since the time of Ezra and the scribes. Our present text, according to Mendelssohn, is an accurate record of the revelation at Sinai.

The second section is named "About the Translation." In this section Mendelssohn reviews the history of the translation of the Torah among the Jewish people, with a few references to non-Jewish translations. After tracing their history from the Targum to contemporary Judeo-German

translations, Mendelssohn explains the reasons for his present endeavor and spells out the methodology for both his translation and his commentary.

Mendelssohn's Introduction concludes with a grammatical treatise, the contents of which is not the main concern of this thesis. It has therefore been omitted.

The final part of the present work is a translation of Mendelssohn's commentary on *Parashat Bereshit* (Gen. 1:1-6:8), the only part of the commentary to Genesis written exclusively by Mendelssohn. This portion begins with the Creation, continues with the Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, the genealogy of the descendents of Adam, and concludes with the introduction of Noah.

In preparing this thesis, an attempt has been made to preserve the appearance of Mendelssohn's work. To that end, any text which appears in capital letters reflects the use of a larger Hebrew typeface in the text itself. Remarks in parentheses are part of the *Bi'ur*. Those in square brackets are from this writer.

It is hoped that this translation is a representative excerpt of Mendelssohn's monumental work, and that it will present the reader with some insight into the man and his thought, especially in the area of Bible.

I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to the following people whose helped me with the preparation of this thesis:

Monty and Ellen Sher's generosity, enthusiasm, and "open door" policy has been of immeasurable benefit. My thanks will never fully express the appreciation I feel.

The writing of a rabbinic thesis has the reputation of being a rather onerous task. That this has not been my experience is due, to a great extent, to my advisor, Dr. Werner Weinberg. His insight and interest in this project have been of great value to me. Most important, however, was the collegial atmosphere which has prevailed in our relationship. The feeling of working "with" a scholar, instead of "under" one had made this endeavor a joy.

I also wish to thank the library staff of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of religion, whose sense of humor is always refreshing.

This Torah, which Moses set before the children of Israel is divided into five books, and they are:

A. The Book of GENESIS—which contains the act of creation, the flood, the generations of the holy fathers and all that happened to them until the coming of Jacob and his sons to Egypt, and the death of Jacob and Joseph.

B. The Book of EXODUS—which relates the slavery of Israel and its redemption, the giving of the Torah and the ordinances, and the making of the tabernacle, the utensils and the garments.

C. The Book of LEVITICUS, which is also called *The Law of the Priests*—which contains matters related to the sacrifice, the sanctity of the priests, impurities and purities, and the rest of the sanctities of the people and the land, especially the laws of the Sabbatical year and the Jubilee.

D. The Book of NUMBERS, which is also called *The Fifth of*

*the Musterings*<sup>2</sup> since its beginning is the numbered of the children of Israel—and it relates, accordingly, the sending of the spies and everything that happened to them as a result of their rebelliousness in the matter of the spies, and includes the commandments and ordinances which God commanded by Moses' hand in the plains of Moab.

E. The Book of DEUTERONOMY, which is also called *The Repetition of the Torah*—in which Moses, at the end of forty years, repeats teaching the children of Israel the Torah of its God. And he added comandments and particulars for them which he had not yet mentioned; promises and assurances if they would obey, and warnings and reproaches if they would not listen to the voice of the Lord, to walk in His ways. And he called as witnesses for them the heavens and the earth. And he wrote an everlasting song for them about this, and he blessed them before his death.

There are those of our rabbis, may their memories be blessed, who count seven books of the Torah (cf. b. Shab. 116a). According to their opinion, the section beginning "And whenever the ark set out..." [Num. 10:35-36] is a book in and of itself. That which comes before it [in the book of Numbers] is a book in and of itself, and that which comes after it is a book in and of itself. As a result, the book

of Numbers is divided into three books.

And, behold, Moses our Teacher, peace be upon him, wrote the entire Torah from "In the beginning..." [Gen. 1:1] to "...in the sight of all Israel"[Deut. 34:12]. And he even included the last verses from "And Moses...died..." [Deut. 34:5] to the end of the Torah.

It occurred to R. Judah that Joshua wrote them. R. Shimon responded to him and said, "Is it conceivable that the Torah is missing even one letter since it is written; 'Take this book of the Law...' (Deut. 31:26)? Rather to this point [i.e. Deut. 34:4] the Holy One, Praised Be He, spoke, and Moses spoke and wrote. From then on, the Holy One, Praised Be He, spoke and Moses wrote with tears, as it says later; 'Baruch answered them; He dictated all these words to me, while I wrote them with ink on the scroll' (Jer. 36:18). And there are books who have the reading that, "The Holy One, praised be He, spoke and Moses wrote, from then on, the Holy One, praised be He, spoke, and Moses wrote with a tear.

Yom Tov ben Abraham Ishbili [c. 1250-1330] wrote that the difference between them is that the first ones were written in ink, while these were written in tears. Thus wrote our Rabbi Meir, may his memory be blessed, "And there are those who say that to this point, '...the Holy One, praised be He, spoke and Moses spoke and wrote.' That is to say, he would say the verse before he would write it,

because of his great devotion, so that he would not err in it. 'From there on, the Holy One, Praised Be He, spoke and Moses wrote with tears.' That is to say, he wrote and cried, but did not say the verse. Thus we say as it is written there, 'He dictated all these words to me with his mouth and I wrote them in the book.' (Jer. 36:18) Because of the sorrow, he did not say and write. The first interpretation is supported by the Scripture about the matter in which it states that the Holy One, Praised Be He, spoke and Moses wrote in ink, as it states in the verse. But there is no reason for this." Thus far his words.

And behold, in Menahot [30a] Rashi interpreted in agreement with the second reason, but in Baba Batra he interpreted in agreement with the first reason. And he writes: " '...it says below...' about all these words, it stands as it says, 'The Holy One, praised Be He, spoke and Moses wrote, as we find that the prophets wrote from the mouths of their masters.' " Thus far his words. This is also forced, for apparently, it does not need proof. But it appears to me that they brought proof from Baruch for good reason, since it could not be possible to question whether the Holy One, praised be He, spoke and Moses wrote the entire Torah. How could he say all the things that were written about them in the third person, and not as they would speak among themselves? For example, in each place

where it says, "And God spoke to Moses..." it would have been even better if it had said, "I, the Lord, spoke to Moses..." or, "And God spoke to me." Is this from the point of view of the speaker who speaks for himself, or is it from the point of view of the writer who speaks for himself? And for what reason did they change the way of the language, speaking in the third person by a third person?

This is a well-known matter, for others have already found it difficult. And this difficulty almost caused them to have doubt in the authorship of the Torah. For this reason he brings proof from Baruch, who himself testifies that he wrote the scroll from the mouth of Jeremiah. In spite of this, the book always mentions Jeremiah and Baruch as speaking in the third person. Reading the scroll to the people [is found] in this wording, "And Jeremiah ordered Baruch, saying..." [Jer. 36:5] and it does not say, "I, Jeremiah, command Baruch..." nor "Jeremiah commanded me..." This proves that the prophets wrote from the mouths of their masters in this manner.

And Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, wrote at the beginning of the Torah that Moses our Teacher did not write the Torah as if he was speaking for himself, and did not mention himself in the Torah until his birth, and it was mentioned as though another spoke about him. Since the Torah precedes the creation of the world, it did not need to

mention the birth of Moses our teacher, peace be upon him. As it appears in the tradition, it was written in black fire upon white fire, and Moses was like a scribe who copied from an earlier book and wrote (see there) [*Petiḥat Haramba"n al Hatorah*].

But it is clearly the truth that Moses was the one who wrote the entire Torah from the beginning of the book of Genesis to "...in the sight of all of Israel," [Deut. 34:12] from the mouth of the Almighty.

For this reason it is written, "And when Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book, to the very end..." (Deut. 31:24) The word "end" proves the definite wholeness of all its parts, that he finished writing the song "Give Ear" [*Ha'azinu*; Deut. 32] and the blessing [*Wezot haberakhah*; Deut. 33:1-34:12] and that which is said after, until "...in the sight of all Israel," [Deut. 34:12] as will be explained there, with God's help.

And this is the proof that R. Shimon offers: "Is it conceivable that the Torah is missing even one letter? Is it not written, 'Take this book of the Law..' [Deut. 31:26]?" [b. B. B. 15a] For if Moses' book was missing the eight verses, how could he have given it to the priests and the Levites to place it in the ark, and not first have given it to Joshua to finish and to add the story of his death? However, it is certain that Moses wrote all of it, and he

did not leave the Torah lacking one letter "...by the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord..." [Deut. 31:26].

Behold, we, the entire congregation of the community of Israel, believe that just as Moses our Teacher, peace be upon him, wrote his Torah, thus is it now in our hands, today. Not one item in it has changed from then until now. Nor did anything happen to it as had happened to secular books, that the scribes and copiers over the course of time made changes in them with additions or deletions or transpositions, sometimes in error due to laziness, and sometimes with intent, in their desire to change the words of the author, to the point that, after a long time, the proper reading was completely forgotten, and the book was permanently reformulated.

But this is not what the faithful God promised us in His covenant, as is written, "...for it shall live unforgotten in the mouths of their descendants..." [Deut. 31:21]. And He taught by His holy prophets, when He says, "And as for me, this is my covenant with them, says the Lord: my spirit which is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or the mouth of your children, or the mouth of your children's children, says the Lord, from this time forth and for evermore." (Isa. 59:21)

And therefore he appointed for us scribes and

Masorettes, who counted<sup>2</sup> all the letters in the Torah, to guard them from addition and deletion. And they supervised the books that were copied to prevent any error in writing, according to the laws passed down from the days of Ezra the scribe and his co-workers, as will be explained below with God's help. And they also paid attention to the pointing and the accents, to correct them as was fit and to guard them from error.

But if in these, there should occur a slight difference between books, for example, a difference in reading between Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali, and the like, this is a small matter, and in an instance in which the difference does not affect the intention, whether it is read in this way or read in that way, the meaning is the same and there is no difference between them except the signs or the loveliness of the reading, and not the meaning that is understood from them. And thus our teachers, may their memories be blessed, said, "~~me~~, nun, tsade, peh, kaf<sup>4</sup>...they had forgotten them and reinstated them.." (Shab. 104a) since there is no difference between them and the open letters, except a change in the script alone, it was possible for them to forget it until it was necessary for the Watchmen to reinstitute them by prophecy.

And it is worthwhile to comment in regard to this matter on four points, and they are:

A. Pronunciation, or the sound of the voice which goes out from the mouth of the speaker to the ear of the listener, through which the listener will understand what is in the mind of the speaker.

B. Regulation of the pronunciation. This is the joining of these sounds, their combination and separation so that they become words and different sentences; the utterances of the syllables and the sounds, and their level and measure.

C. The Script. The figures and signs by which the syllables and the pronunciation are known to those who see them, such as the letters and the vowels.

D. The regulation of the script. These are the signs for the regulation of the pronunciation which we have mentioned, such as the joining of the letters and words and their separation by the spaces between them, and the vowel points [consonants] and the accents. And in the Holy Tongue, the vowels are also marked by the points that are under the script, and therefore the vowels are also part of the rule of the regulation of the writing.

And we shall speak about each of these subjects individually.

The Holy Tongue, in which the Twenty-four Books which we have in our hands today were written, is the language God, may His name be praised, spoke to the Adam, to Cain, to Noah, and to the Holy Fathers, and in it did He proclaim the Commandments from Mount Sinai, and the tablets were written, and in it did he speak to Moses and His prophets. And this is sufficient to show its superiority, advantage and beauty over all other languages, so that it can be called the Holy Tongue.

And [we read] in Genesis Rabbah (31:8) " 'Make a fiery serpent...' [Num. 21:8] is not explained. R. Yudan said in the name of R. Isar [Assi], 'The wise man will hear and increase in learning...' [Prov. 1:6] This refers to Moses, since the Holy One, praised be He, said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent...' [Num. 21:8] and did not explain it. He [Moses] thought 'If I make it of gold, this word [zahav] does not fit that word [nahash=serpent]. [If I make it] of silver, this word [qesef] does not fit that word. Behold, I will make it with bronze [nehoshet], and this word will fit that word. From here we learn that the Torah was given in the Holy Tongue. R. Pinhas and R. Hezekiah said in the name of R. Simon, 'Just as the Torah was given in the Holy Tongue, so too was the world created in the Holy Tongue. Have you ever heard anyone say *gyne*, *gyneia*, (*ita*, *iteta*); this is the reading of the *Arukh*, under the rubric

"anthrope") *anthrope, anthropeia, gavra, gavrata?* However, we say *ish, ishah*, because this word fits that word." (This is also brought out in the same place, section 18:4; see also *Yefe To'ar* [commentary to *Genesis Rabbah*, Venice 1597-1606, by Samuel Jaffe b. Isaac Ashkenazi, 16th. cent.] to that section.)

This is its interpretation: From here [we conclude] that the Torah was given in the Holy Tongue, that is to say that God spoke to Moses in the Holy Tongue, in which one word fits the other, therefore Moses our Teacher, peace be upon him, understood on his own that the intention of God, may He be praised, was that he should make a bronze serpent. And since there are those who say that the script changed from Assyrian to Hebrew, as will be explained below, God willing, it might be possible to err and state, according to the opinions of those who err, that the language also changed, and that the Torah was given in another language. Therefore proof was brought that it was given in the Holy Tongue.

R. Simon added that the world was created with the Holy Tongue, that it to say, this was the language of man from the beginning of creation. This was the language which the Holy One, praised be He, taught the man and his wife, and they spoke it among themselves. And he brought proof from that which Adam said, "...she shall be called woman [*ishah*]

for she was taken from man [*ish*]..." [Gen. 2:23]<sup>5</sup> For "man" and "woman" are only similar in pronunciation in the Holy Tongue. But in the Greek version, the man is *anthropos* and the woman is *gyne*, and one is not derived from the other. And thus in the Aramaic version, the man is *gavra* and the woman is *iteta*. It is proven that Adam could not have spoken Greek or Aramaic. And it is not necessary to bring evidence about the other languages, because only in the aforementioned languages, which are ancient and praiseworthy, is there room to err. The people who used them were settled, and their men were men of etiquette and laws from of old.

And in truth, the Aramaic language is almost as important as the Holy Tongue, so much so that the Torah talks in it occasionally. In Sanhedrin (38b) "R. Yehuda said in the name of Rav, Adam spoke Aramaic, as it is written; 'How weighty are your thoughts to me, O God [Ps. 139:17]'"<sup>6</sup> And the meaning is that he *also* spoke Aramaic, for it was not unknown to R. Yehuda that in Aramaic the word "man" does not fit the word "woman."

And the Greek language was praised by our Sages, as is found in Megilah (9b) about the verse "God will enlarge Japheth..." [Gen. 9:27], see there.<sup>7</sup> This is not the case with all other languages, so there is no chance of doubt or error with them at all.

Henceforth, there is no support for the argument of R. Isaac Arama [c. 1420-1494] in his book, '*Aqedat Yitshaq*' [Salnika, 1522], section eight, in the chapter entitled, "*Sha'ar Haḥibur*." He responds to the evidence of R. Simon, that someone told him that the name of the man and the woman were not translated from another language, since they accept the translation, and are they not like proper names, whose translation they do not accept? But according to our opinion it was only necessary for R. Simon to refute that it was not translated from Aramaic or Greek, and therefore he said that in them the word does not fit the other. And if perhaps there is some other language in the world in which "man" and "woman" are similar in pronunciation, it should not be a worry, as I have written, for there is only room for error in those languages [i.e. Greek or Aramaic].

And behold, the proof from the proper nouns which were left in the Torah is strong and unassailable, and cannot be refuted. Since the way of these names is that they are not translated from one language to another, but rather, they remain in their original form, [e.g.] Homer, Plato, Alexander, Caesar, and Cicero, thus are their names in all languages; they only change a little due to the special pronunciation of different peoples. And we have seen that the Torah gives a reason for the coining of proper names; Adam from *adamah* (*adamah* from the color, for the earth which

was found in that climate was described by travellers as being red). Eve [*ḥavah*] from the "mother of all living [*ḥay*]" [Gen. 3:20]. Thus also Cain, Seth, Abel, Noah, and Peleg. For each, the reason for the coining is explained, and it only makes sense in the Holy Tongue, in which one word fits another. And these names remain in the Holy Tongue, no matter into what language the stories of the Torah are translated—Adam, Cain, Eve, and the like. And the reason for the coining is not recognizable in those languages. And this is strong proof and faithful testimony that their first coining was in the Holy Tongue.

And behold, there used to be one language and one speech in all the world, until the days of Peleg, in whose days the world was divided, and the families were separated one from another, from one end of the earth to the other, as a result of the sin of the generation of the Dispersion. And the languages were mixed up, as Scripture says, "...there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth" (Gen. 11:9). And the language was changed and altered by this confusion and mixing, for each and every people, according to its language. And for some of the languages, there remained a similarity with the early language, from which they originated, whereas some were far removed from them over the course of time, and the travels

of the nations, to the point that there was no longer any similarity in pronunciation at all.

And these languages multiplied as they would. And our sages, may their memory be blessed, divided them into seventy languages, according to what they found from the book of the sons of Shem, Ham, and Japhet, at that time, and thus they counted, in the *Pesiqta derav Kahana*,<sup>13</sup> one by one: fourteen to Japhet, thirty to Ham, and twenty-six to Shem. But among the sons of Ham, he skipped Ashur and the Philistines, but these two are exceptions, as was already considered.

But this Holy Tongue, in its glory, purity, and loveliness, remained only in the hands of Eber, the father of Peleg and his seed, who were keepers of the commandment which God had commanded the man and his wife in that tongue. And our sages, may their memory be blessed, say that it was the seven commandments by which the sons of Noah were commanded [in the Hebrew language]. And there is no doubt that Adam and Eve, who heard these commandments from the mouth of the Almighty in the Holy Tongue, transmitted to their children, and their children to their children, in this language.

Thus it seems that the stories of Genesis were made known to Adam and Eve by the mouth of God, and they were transmitted from the mouth of one generation to the next

generation down to Eber, as I have argued in my commentary on the book of Genesis (2:1), and this was also in the Holy Tongue.

For this reason, the Holy Tongue is called the Hebrew Tongue, after Eber, according to a few writers (but, according to Rashi and R. Obadiah from Bertinora, it is called Hebrew because it comes from across the river [*me-ever hanahar*]) since, at the time of the Dispersion, it only remained, in its sense, with him. And from him, it was passed down to his children, until it reached Abraham our father, peace be upon him, and his house, and to Isaac and his house, and to Jacob and his house. And it went down with them to Egypt, and there too they did not change their hallowed language, as our sages, may their memory be blessed, mentioned, and may it to their merit.

And there is believable evidence for this from the proper nouns that are mentioned in the Torah, generation after generation, all of which are mined from the quarry of the Hebrew language. For example, Abraham from "...father of a multitude of nations [*av hamon*]" [Gen. 17:4] and Ishmael from "...God heard...[*shama' el*]" [Gen. 21:17], and thus also Isaac and Jacob, and his sons, the tribes of God, all of them are words which fit the Holy Tongue. And the daughters of Lot who grew up in Abraham's household called their sons Moav and Ben Ami, since they were born of their

father. And the names of the wells and the places, like *Be'er Leḥai Ro'i* and *Be'er Sheva'*, and *Eśeq* and *Šitna*, *Tso'ar* and *Mitspeh*, *Sukot* and *Bet El*, *Evel Mitsrayim*, and the like. All of these names prove that their source was the Hebrew language, in which the word is understood from its context. And in every language into which the Torah is translated, the names remain as they are in the Holy Tongue, but their context, like the reason for the calling of the name, were changed by the translation, and, as a result, the similarity of the pronunciation is lost, and the names no longer fit their context.

For example, "...and she called his name Reuben; for she said, 'Because the Lord has looked [*ra'ah*] upon my affliction...'" [Gen. 29:32] is translated by Onkelos, "for she said, that my humiliation has appeared [*gali*] before God..." [ibid.]. And thus Levi, from "...my husband will be joined [*yelaweh*] to me..." [Gen. 29:34] is translated, "...my husband will be joined [*yithaber*] to me..." [ibid.]. And the bronze serpent [*nehash hanehoshet*; cf. Num. 21:9] is translated, "...bronze serpent [*ḥavya deneḥasta*]," and in the German language, "*kupferne schlange*." And thus, the matter is the same with each word that fits another. And the prophet says, "...and he looked for justice [*mishpat*], but behold bloodshed [*mispaḥ*], for righteousness [*tsedaqah*], but behold, a cry [*tse'aqah*]!" [Isa. 5:7], but the Aramaic

translation is, "...and I said, they served justice [dinal], but behold, they were violent [anusin], I said they worked for acquittal [zaku], but behold, they increased guilt [masgan hovin]..." [Targ. Jon. ibid.].

And no enlightened man would doubt that when God, may He be praised, spoke with men, He caused His voice to be heard with all the proper regulation for that pronunciation which He used; the sound of the letters by the use of the vowels, their conjunction and disjunction according to the contextual needs, the level of the pitches in depth or in height, length or shortness, the phrasing of the melodies in the proper places; and without all these, the speech would not have been understood by the listener as was necessary.

For example, God said to Cain, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now etc." (Gen. 4:10[-11]). There is no doubt that the voice heard by Cain articulated the syllables according to the rules of the language, and joined the letters [consonants] with the vowels that were proper for them, so that they became words, and He joined the words and stopped between them according to the need for the meaning. He joined, for example, the word "what [mah]" with the word "have you done [asita]," and paused briefly with a raising of the voice on the word "have you done" like one who asks a question. And there was a greater pause at the word

"ground," for there he finished the cause, and began to relate the effect, "And now you are cursed from the ground..." [Gen. 4:11]. And in the phrase, "...the voice of your brother's blood etc.," he stopped briefly on the word "brother," for there he finished the subject and began the predicate, "...is crying to me..." And the word "from [min]" which is a preposition and is short in comparison with the word "earth [adamah]" which comes after it, is heard in succession without any stop, but there is a brief stop on the word "to me [elay]," for there the predicate ends, and that which follows it only relates the place where the action took place, "from the ground."

And all these things are well known and publicized among linguists, and on some of them are formed the rules for placing the accents and the trope, by which the Holy Tongue is set apart from all the other languages known to us. They do not pay such close attention to strict grammar, so that the joining of words and their separation are related to the joining of ideas and their separation, so that the ways of the language from this point of view agree with the ways of the soul and its thoughts, and the external speech is meshed with the internal speech in complete unity. And we will discuss this further below, God willing.

But know, however, that the joining or separation of the words alone, which the signs of the accents show, is not

sufficient, for if the words are said with complete precision in the flow and pause, without changes and transpositions in the level of the sounds and their value and their melody as is fitting according to the matter, they will be like dry bones which do not have in them a living spirit; that which is in the heart of the speaker will practically not be understood. And if it is not understood, it will not be pleasing to the palate, like that tasteless food that has no salt in it [cf. Job 6:6], and will not enter the heart of the hearer, to excite him and to make him pay attention, so that our rabbis said, "the one who reads without a tune..." [cf. b. Meg. 32a].<sup>2</sup> For there is, for each and every idea, a level of the voice and a tune, such as will work upon the soul, a tune for a question and a tune for surprise, and thus for love and for hate, for anger and for delight, for warning and for revenge, for happiness and for sadness. For example, the words, "...Where is Abel your brother?" [Gen. 4:9] are only a question, without any emotion at all. But the question, "...What is that you have done?" [Gen. 3:13] has in it the matter of one who is surprised and gives a warning to a sinner. And the phrase, "...the voice of your brother's blood..." [Gen. 4:11] contains pity for the innocent blood which had been spilled, and the zeal to take his revenge on the one who spilled it. And it concludes with words of rebuke and scorn and

reproach, "And now you are cursed from the ground..." [Gen. 4:11]. And even if all these matters do not have signs and marks in the script, in any event, a person who wishes to stress his words, must change and transpose the sounds of the pronunciation, according to the matter that is understood from them, and according to the relationship that is between the emotions and the levels of the voice and the tune.

For now, there is no doubt that Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, heard all the words of the Torah from the mouth of the Almighty, with all the splendor, and the correct points, and the accents that are related to them, with their particulars and their combinations; not one word was lacking from them.<sup>10</sup> And he passed them to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and thus it was handed down generation after generation. The son who learned from his father, or the student who learned from his teacher, heard the words from them with all the correctness of pronunciation which is fitting for them, according to how he, too, had received it from his father or teacher, and thus he taught them diligently to his son and to his student. For this is the [meaning of] commandment, "...and you shall teach them diligently to your children..." [Deut. 6:7], that they should be very clear in his mouth. They did not give the holy writings to the children or to the students and leave

them to read it from the script alone, for it would be like the words of a sealed book to them. Rather, they read it before them, and they repeated it with them, out loud, with melody and chant, and they would pass to them by this means the accents of the Torah, and they would sweeten the honey of its sayings for them, until the words would enter their hearts, and there they will be "...like goads, and like nails firmly fixed..." [Qoh. 12:11].

And about the matter of the script in which Moses wrote his Torah, there is a disagreement among the later authors, whether it is [sic]<sup>11</sup> is the script which is in our hands today or not. The essence of the disagreement is from that which comes in Sanhedrin, [in the] chapter [entitled] "The High Priest" (21b), "Mar Zutra, or some say Mar Uqbah, said that in the beginning, the Torah was given to Israel in the Hebrew script and in the Holy Tongue. Later, in the days of Ezra, it was given to them in the Assyrian script, in the Aramaic language. They selected the Assyrian script and the Holy Tongue for Israel, and they left the Hebrew script and the Aramaic language to the common people. Who are the common people? R. Hisda said, the Samaritans [see below]. What is the Hebrew script? R. Hisda said, the *libon'ah* script.

(Rashi comments, "Hebrew script: of the children of the far side of the river, And *libon'ah* script: large letters

like those they write on amulets and *mezuzot*." But Rabenu Tam comments, "*libon'ah*: a name of a place in which they write a different script." And thus it seems that the larger letters are not so different from the smaller ones, that the expert in one would not know how to read the other, as it is written, "...but they could not read the writing..." (Dan. 5:8). And furthermore, the matter is well known in our day, that the Samaritans, who are the men of Samaria, have a script different from the Assyrian script, as it is noted below. Thus wrote Maimonides, may his memory be blessed, in his commentary on Mishna *Yadayim*, chapter 4, mishna 5, that it is the script which is customary among the people who are called *El Samirah*, which is Samaria, and thus wrote R. Ovadiah from Bertinoro, there.)

"It is taught in a *baraita*, R. Yosi said, Ezra would not have been worthy that the Torah was given to Israel by his hand, were it not that Moses preceeded him. About Moses, it says, 'And Moses went up to God...' (Ex. 19:3) and about Ezra it says, 'This Ezra went up from Babylon...' (Ezra 7:6). Just as 'going up' which is said there means Torah, so too 'going up' which is said farther on means Torah. About Moses it says, 'And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you the statutes and ordinances...' (Deut. 4:14). About Ezra it says, 'For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to teach His statutes and ordinances in

Israel' (Ezra 7:10).

"And even though the Torah was not given by his hand, its script was changed by his hand, as it is written, '...and the [script of the] letter was written in Aramaic and translated [into Aramaic]' (Ezra 4:7). And it is written, '...but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation' (Dan. 5:8). And it is written, '...he shall write...a copy of the law...' (Deut. 17:18) in a script that was fit to be changed.

"Why is it called Assyrian? Because it came up with them from Assyria. It is taught in a *baraita*: Rabbi said, in this script the Torah was given to Israel in the beginning; since they scorned it, it turned into *ro'ats* [broken script] for them. But when they repented, they returned it [i.e. the original script] to them as it is written, 'Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope, today I declare I will restore to you double' (Zech. 9:12). Why is it called Assyrian? Because its script is substantial [*me'ushar*].

"R. Shimon b. Eliezer said, in the name of R. Eliezer b. Parta, who spoke in the name of R. Eliezer of Modi'in, this script was never changed...According to R. Shimon, who said this script never changed, what is the meaning of, '...they could not read the writing...' [Dan. 5:8]? Rav said it was written for them in gematria etc..." [b. Sanh. 21b-22a]

And Rashi, may his memory be blessed, commented, "And the [script of the] letter was written [Ezra 4:7]: the writing that was changed, and this verse in Ezra states that in his day, they wrote in a different script that was changed by the angel who wrote, 'Mene, Mene, Teqel, Ufarsin...' [Dan. 5:26]. In the days of Daniel, he wrote in Aramaic script, and in the Aramaic language, for it says, '...they could not read the writing...' [Dan. 5:8] for they were not able to read the script that the angel wrote in the days of Belshazar. And there were many Jews there: we learn from this that that script was changed for them on that day. 'A copy of this law...' [Deut. 17:18]: Moses our teacher hinted to us that the script of his day would, in the future, be changed from the Hebrew to the Assyrian, which he gave to them in the days of Daniel, and Ezra came and wrote the Torah in it, in the Assyrian script.

"In this writing was the Torah given to Israel in the days of Moses, and why [does it say] '...they could not read the writing...' [Dan.5:8]? Since they sinned at the time of the first Temple, they scorned the Torah, and it turned to *ra'ats* before them, from the word, '...shatters [*tir'ats*] the enemy.' [Ex. 15:6], that they forgot it." Thus far his words.

And behold, the words of the rabbi [i.e Rashi], may his memory be blessed, are very difficult to overcome, for

with regard to his interpreting, "...the letter was written..." [Ezra 4:7] as "the script was changed," you must say, against your will, that this is only in the manner of a homily, for this word occurs in the book of Ezra several times, and its explanation according to its context is as a letter [i.e. correspondence], and thus the king responded, "...the letter which you sent us..." (Ezra 4:18), and the letter which the king wrote is called, "...King Artaxerxes' letter..." (*ibid.* 4:23).<sup>12</sup> And thus Rashi interpreted there, "...and he wrote a letter...". And he wrote the letter, written in Aramaic letters, and the letter was interpreted in the Aramaic language. If this is the case, what proof is there from the writing of the letter, which the enemies of Israel wrote to the king in the script in which Ezra wrote the Torah? And furthermore, that not only did they not write in Assyrian, but rather in Aramaic, as it is written in the explanation, "...and he wrote Aramaic." And if the writing is called the "...letter that was translated..." and it is fitting to be changed, that is to say, fitting that the script should be changed for him, it is difficult to say in what script the king wrote in the days of Belshazar, that they would not know how to read? And furthermore, with all this, we do not know who changed the script. Sometimes it is said it was changed by the king, and sometimes it is said it was changed by Ezra. And furthermore, one is surprised at R.

Yosi, the author of this section, who brought three verses; why did he first cite a verse from Ezra, and then a verse from Daniel, and then a verse of the Torah? The end of the matter is that I do not know how to understand the words of the *baraita* according to the interpretation of Rashi, may his memory be blessed, at all. And it seems that words of our sages, may their memory be blessed, must be interpreted in another way. For behold, the writing of this letter about which it is said, "...the letter was written in Aramaic and translated" [Ezra 4:7], were words of enmity, which the Samaritans, haters of Israel, wrote to King Artaxerxes to undermine the project of the builders of the Temple, and thus it says there (Ezra 4:9) "...Rehum the commander<sup>13</sup> and Shimshai the scribe (it means [cf. Rashi, *ibid.*] Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe) and the rest of their associates (and the rest of their co-workers) the judges, the governors, the officials, the Persians, the men of Erech, the Babylonians, the men of Susa, the Elamites (all these are the names of the peoples who Senacherib settled in the cities of Samaria[]) and the rest of the nations who the great and mighty Qsnappar deported and settled in the cities of Samaria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River" [Ezra 4:10]. ("Persians": these are the Persians whom Senacherib settled in the cities of Samaria. "...and the rest of the [district] Beyond the River...", "the rest of the

nations which are beyond the river, since the Euphrates River forms a partition between the land of Israel and Babylonia, it happens that those nations which are on the side of the land of Israel are "beyond the river" for those who stand in Babylon--Rashi).

And these Samaritans, writers of the letter, are called "common people" (Ezra 4:4). And our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, called them "common people" [*hediotot*]. They took for themselves the Aramaic language and the Hebrew script, as Mar Zutra said, and the matter was well known in the days of the sages of the Talmud. And thus it is until now, as will be noted below, with God's help. And they wrote the letter in the Aramaic language, which was their language, and in the Aramaic script, which, as it seems, is the Hebrew script which the Samaritans chose. And since Ezra the scribe, who brought the words of the letter in the language in which it was written (for Ezra wrote his book, as our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said in Baba Batra 16[a]), mentions that it was written in Aramaic script and in the Aramaic language, this means that this was not the script that he used when he wrote his book, for if this was the same script, why would he need to mention and to explain in which script or language the letter was written? He only had to say, "In the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam and Mithredeth and Tabeel etc. wrote *kazeh* or *kanema*, and we

would have known it was like [the script] of the letter which is actually before us in its and language. However, if the script of the letter was different from the script of the book of Ezra, the author correctly mentioned it to us, and informed us that there it was the Aramaic script and the Aramaic language, that he would write in that language without change, but would change the script and use a different script. And it is proven from this that the script in which Ezra wrote his book, was not the script of the Samaritans, but rather Assyrian, as we have it in our hands now.

And behold, Ezra and his co-workers regulated the translation of the Torah, as our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said (Ned. 37b), "R. Hanael said in Rav's name, what is the meaning of 'And they read from the book, from the Torah of God, clearly; and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading' (Neh. 8:8)? 'And they read from the book of the law of God....,' this is Scripture. '...clearly...,' this is translation." And it seems that they had a translation before them in a book, for this is the meaning of the writing, and since they wrote the book of Ezra and Daniel in the Aramaic language, in the Assyrian script, undoubtedly, they wrote the translation of the Torah correspondingly, in the Assyrian script. Therefore Mar Zutra said that in the days of Ezra, the Torah was again

given to Israel in the Assyrian script and the Aramaic language; meaning that, in his day, and by his hand, the Torah was translated into the Aramaic language, and the translation was written in Assyrian script. And behold, the angel who wrote for Belshazar [i.e. "the handwriting on the wall", cf. Dan. 5], necessarily wrote in the same script in which the men of the Great Assembly wrote the book of Daniel (for they wrote [the Book of] Ezekiel, the Twelve [Minor Prophets], and the Scroll of Esther, as our sages, may their memory be blessed, said in Baba Batra 16), that is, the Assyrian script, for behold, the writer did not mention that he wrote Aramaic, as he mentioned in Ezra. And further, was it necessary to explain there, in order to make known which script it was, for were they not able to read it? Rather, of course, it was the Assyrian script, as it is before us in the book of Daniel. And, if so, it was not necessary to mention a thing, neither the script nor the language, for thus it was as it is before us. And there were many Jews there, and they were not able to read that script, as it is written, "...but they could not read the writing..." [Dan.5:8], and afterward, in the days of Ezra, this script was publicized by this scribe, since in the days of Daniel, they did not know how to read the Assyrian script, which was the script that Ezra and his co-workers used.

And understand from this why R. Yosi brought the verse

from Ezra, and afterward the verse from Daniel. For if the verse from Ezra was not understood, neither would have been the verse from Daniel, for we would not have known in which language the king wrote. But since he mentions in Ezra that it was written in Aramaic and translated into Aramaic, and in Daniel it does not mention this at all, it proves that the king wrote in the same script that the men of the Great Assembly wrote when they wrote the book of Daniel, which is in the Assyrian script. And it is written, "...they could not..." which proves that they changed the script afterwards.

And so that it will not be difficult for you to understand how Ezra and his co-workers were allowed to change the script, is it not written, "These are the commandments..." [Lev. 27:34], to teach from then on no prophet is allowed to introduce something new, and does this not also apply to the script, as it is found in Megilah (3a)? Therefore R. Yosi added "...write...a copy of this law..." [Deut.17:18], a script that is fit to be changed, as if to say, a verse was found and interpreted, as the Tosafot solved this very problem, that these great ones relied on this homily when they changed the script. Now, with God's help, the words of R. Yosi are explained clearly, and perhaps one can reject the words of Rashi, may his memory be blessed, and interpret them in a way that will agree with

our words.

R. Joseph Albo [15th cent.] author of *Sefer Ha'iqarim* (section 3, chapter 7),<sup>14</sup> understood the words according to their meaning, that, according to the opinion of R. Yosi and Mar Zutra, Moses our teacher, wrote his Torah in the Hebrew script, which is the script that the Samaritans use, and in which the tablets were written. And in the days of Ezra, the script was changed to Assyrian, which came up with them from Babylonia (which is called *Syrisch* [Syrian]).

But R. Yom Tov b. Abraham Ishbili wrote in the name of the authors of the Tosafot, that it had never been the opinion of even one of our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, that the tablets and the book of Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, were not written in this upright and hallowed script which is in our hand, and upon which countless laws and secrets are based. And if the tablets were written in the Hebrew script, what about the miracle of the *mem* and the *samekh* that are on the tablets, for in the script of the Samaritans, the *mem* and the *samekh* are not complete circles)? But of course, there is no doubt that this script which is called Assyrian is the hallowed script which is on the tablets, and as a result it is called "holy". And because of the perfection and holiness of this script, in those days they would not write it even in books that every king or individual wrote for himself, but they

would write the Hebrew script, and therefore, when the Ark was hidden, they forgot the [final] letters *mem, nun, tsade, peh, kaf* (since these letters are only customary in Assyrian). And when they were exiled to Assyria, and the people of Assyria came to know this script, they took it for themselves. Either they [the Assyrians], had this script with them before this, since it was known to them from the Holy Book [i.e. the Torah], in addition to their writing, or they saw it with the exceptional individuals of the exiles, and desired it, and the Israelites became used to it together with them [the Assyrians] and this is the meaning of "...it came up with them from Assyria etc...", see the book, *Ein Ya'akov* (Meg. page 81),<sup>12</sup> and the author expounds there the argument against the author of *Sefer Ha'iqari* [i.e. Albo], and proves, according to the opinion of R. Yom Tov b. Abraham Ishbili, who is mentioned above, that our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, only differed about the books that an individual wrote for himself, and that is why they were careful to say that the Torah was given to Israel, that is; to each and every individual, since the Assyrian script was not made known to multitudes, until the days of Ezra. But about the tablets and the book of Moses, there is no doubt that they were written in the Assyrian script.

But in the Jerusalem Talmud, in the first chapter of Megilah, it says, "R. Levi said, some say in *ra'ats* (from

this it is understood that *ra'ats* is the name of a foreign script, just like *la'az* is for a foreign pronunciation) was the Torah given, and the [letter] *'ayin* was a miraculous act, and others say that the Torah was given in the Assyrian [script], and the *samekh* was a miraculous act. And in truth we see that the letters of the Samaritans (which the author of *Imre Binah* [Azariah b. Moses dei Rossi, c. 1511-C. 1578] chapter 26, brings) the *'ayin* is a complete circle, like the form of our *samekh*. And therefore R. Levi said that according to the one who said that *ra'ats* is the Hebrew script in which the Torah was given, that on the tablets the *'ayin* was a miraculous act, and according to the one who says that the Torah was given in the Assyrian [script], the *samekh* is a miraculous act.

In any case, we understand from his words, that it was an opinion of an individual that the tablets were also written in the Hebrew script, and not, according to the author we cited, that our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, never differed over this, but that in which they were in agreement, according to the word of our holy Rabbi [R. Yehuda Hanasi] and R. Shimon, is that the Torah Moses wrote and the tablets were in the Assyrian [script]. And thus the geonim R. Shrira and R. Hai proved (in the responsa of R. Moses Alshekh, [d. after 1593] 74). And these are the words of Maimonides, may his memory be blessed, in the

Commentary on Mishna, Tractate Yadayim (chapter 4), "...the script in which we write is the Assyrian script, and it is the script in which God, may He be praised, wrote the Torah. And it is called 'Assyrian' [*ashuri*] because of its greatness and beauty, as in, 'Happy [*ashri*] am I! For the women will call me happy' [Gen. 30:13], and they call it Assyrian because it is upright [*me'ushar*] in its script." Thus far his words. And thus wrote the Efodi [Profiat Duran, d. c. 1414]; and R. Moses Alshekh concluded and wrote, and these are his words, "Indeed, the Samaritans--that their Torah and all their books are written in that same script, and still today they maintain they have a Torah in Shechem that was written in the days of Pinhas B. Eleazar, and other things like it." Thus far his words.

And I have seen that some of the authors of the sages of the Christians also testify and relate that even today there remain a few of these Samaritans on Mount Gerizim and in Shechem and in places nearby. And they have a kind of tabernacle and altar, and priests who offer sacrifices and burn incense there. And they say that they have never performed idolatry, but rather that Hadrian Caesar set up an image of a dove for them on Mount Gerizim in order to anger them. And almost 200 years ago, the sage [Jacobos] Userius [1581-1656] brought five or six copies of their Torah, which is written in the Hebrew script and in the Holy Tongue. And

M. Desanzi, an ambassador of the king of France to the court of Turkey, bought, in the city of Damascus, in the year 1616, according to their reckoning, a very beautiful scroll written in that script. And he brought it to Paris. And it was published in 1632 in the *Polyglot* (that is, a Tanakh with several translations in different languages []).

And scholars in England revised this manuscript according to the aforementioned other manuscripts of Userius. And they again printed it in their *Polyglot*. And after their study and scrutiny of these manuscripts, the authors proved with strong and unassailable evidence, that it was copied to the Hebrew script [i.e. Old Hebrew] from the script which is in our hands, since they found several transpositions and changes from the Torah which is in our hands. And after the examination, they found that most of these changes were born of the transposition of letters that are similar in the script, like the *he* and the *het*, the *resh* and the *dalet*, the *bet* and the *kaf*, and the like. And since it appeared with certainty that in their Hebrew writing these letters are not at all similar, and it is not conceivable to exchange them, one is forced to say that their first scribe had before him a Torah written in the Assyrian [script], in which the letters are similar in writing, and he erred and transposed them. And furthermore, they found extra words in it, which can only be a kind of

commentary, and they entered them into the Scriptures. They also made a change and wrote "Mount Gerizim" in place of "Mount Ebal" [Deut. 26:24], for their own purpose. And the rest of the changes and transpositions that are in their Scripture; most are scribal errors, intentionally or by mistake, and, in any case, their fathers have given them a false inheritance, if they said to them that this was written from the days of Pinhas b. Eleazar, as R. Moses Alshekh wrote in their name. In addition, they brought from there their translation, which is written in the Hebrew script, as our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, wrote, "...and they left the Hebrew script and the Aramaic writing to the common people...", and this is also printed in the aforementioned *Polyglot*.

And behold, Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, wrote at the end of his commentary on the Torah,<sup>16</sup> and these are his words, "God blessed me to this point, and I came to Acco, and there I found, in the hands of the elders of the land, a silver coin, engraved with stamped engravings. On one side was an almond branch, and, on the other side, some kind of flask, and on both sides, around the edge, was a clearly engraved script. And they showed it to the Samaritans, and they read it immediately, for it was the Hebrew script which remained to the Samaritans, as mentioned in Tractate Sanhedrin. And they read on one side, 'a shekel

of shekels,' and on the other side, 'Jerusalem the Holy etc...'. And thus wrote Maimonides, may his memory be blessed, in his responsum, that the letters and the secular books, and everything that they engraved on coins and the Temple shekels--all were in the Hebrew script, for it was forbidden to write the Assyrian script, in which the Torah in truth was given, except for the Holy Writings alone, and Israel has never moved from being careful about this.

And we will speak about the regulation of the writing, that is; the separation [of words and sentences] and the points and the accents. The book which Moses, peace be upon him, wrote for Israel, had in it neither points nor accents, and the masters of the wisdom of the Kabbalah said that it did not contain the separation [of the word and sentences] that are between one verse and the next, or between one word and the next. For thus wrote Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, at the beginning of his Commentary on the Torah, and these are his words, "and it appears that the words of the Torah, which were written in black fire upon white fire, as in that matter which we have mentioned, that it was written continuously, without a break between words. And it was possible in its reading, that it would be read by the [kabbalistic] names, and also that it be read according to the content of the Torah and the commandments. And it was given to Moses our teacher by the way of the division of the

reading of the commandments, and the way of reading it by the [kabbalistic] names was passed to him orally." Thus far his words [*Petiḥat Haramba"n al Hatorah*].

And you know that, without the transposition of syllables and sounds that are marked by the signs of distances, and the points and the accents, it is impossible in any way to teach the words of the Torah and the commandments to a student, and to make him understand them, until he comprehends their simple meaning and that which is revealed from them, excluding the allusions and the secrets that are in them. And if so, there is no doubt that Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, made known the transposition of the sounds to Joshua by mouth, and from him the tradition was passed down, as is known.

And thus wrote the Kuzari [i.e. Judah Halevi] (section 3, paragraph 30), "The Torah which Moses wrote for Israel, no doubt, was a simple book without point or accent, as we see a Torah scroll today etc..." And in section 31, the author said, "...without doubt the *pataḥ* and the *qamats* and the *shever* [*ḥiriq*], and the declensions and the *shwa*, and the accents were preserved in their memories. In the memories the priests because of the need of the service and to instruct the children of Israel, and in the memories of the kings, because they were commanded, '...and he shall read in it all the days of his life...' [Deut. 17:19], and

in the memories of the judges, because of their need for them in the laws, and in the memory of the Sanhedrin, because of their need for them in that which is written, 'Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding...' [Deut. 4:6], and in the memories of the pious ones, so that they will receive a reward, and in the memories of the hypocrites, so that they can boast with them. And they placed the seven kings [the masoretic full vowels] and the accents as signs for the forms which they had taken over in the tradition." Thus far his words.

And the later authors were anxious to know when the signs for the transposition of those sounds, which we have today, were placed, and who introduced them. The great grammarian, Elijah Bahur [Levita, 1468-1549] elaborated on this, in his book, *Masoret Hamasoret*<sup>17</sup> [1538], in the third introduction, and the author of *Imre Binah*, chapter 59, and the physician, our teacher and master R. Anshel Worms [1695-1759], in his book, *Syag Latorah* [Frankfort a.M., 1766], says, that some of them say those writing marks, too, were transmitted from Sinai, and they brought proofs for this; however, they did not explain their words, whether their meaning was that these marks were transmitted by mouth or that they came from of old in the books of individuals, and were transmitted from there to us, and that they were renewed in the days of the men of the Great Assembly. And

you have seen those who say, in Megilah (3a) and in Nedarim (37a),<sup>10</sup> "Why is it written, 'And they read from the book, from the law of God, clearly; and they gave the sense so that the people understood the meaning' (Neh. 8:8)? 'And they read from the book of the law of God..., ' this is Scripture; '...clearly..., ' this is Targum; '...and they gave the sense..., ' these are the divisions of the sentences; '...and the people understood the reading;' this is the accentuation, and others say they are the Masorah." And the meaning of these words is that all this was written before them in a book and marked by marks and signs, by Ezra and his co-workers, who were the men of the Great Assembly.

And R. Elijah Bahur wished to reject this evidence when he said that that which is understood from the aforementioned words is only that Ezra and his colleagues, when they read the Torah to Israel, translated it for them orally, into the Aramaic language, which was then their language. And they stopped in their reading between one verse and another, as was received by them from Moses; they did not have the accents we have in our hands. However, his words do not make sense, for our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said about the Targum, that it was given to Israel by Ezra in the Assyrian script, behold, the translation was then before them in script, not only orally, as R. Elijah Bahur thought; and it appears that this is the case with the

points and the accents; that they were all marked and recorded before them in writing.

And the opinion of R. Elijah Bahur, that these signs were not known by their signs and their names to the sages of the Talmud, but rather, they were introduced after its conclusion in the days of the Masorettes, and these were the men of Tiberias, who according to his opinion, were great experts in Scriptures and purists in language more than all the rest of the Jews of those generations, and no more like them arose after them. They regulated all the points and the accents in order. However, the names of the points and the accents changed after that in every generation, with the countenance of the grammarians, the sages of the generations.

However, the author of *Imre Binah* rejected this his reason from the first books of the Kabalists, and they are the book of *Bahir*, the *Zohar*, the *Tiqunin*, and the *Adara*, which preceded not only the conclusion of the Gemara, but also the composition of the Mishna.<sup>19</sup> And there are noted the names of the points and the accents, according to their forms, which we have. And it may be said as an excuse for [Elijah] Bahur that, in his day the books, were not printed and well known. And he himself, if he stood with us today, would acknowledge and say, "I agree".

And behold, even if the evidence from those books is

not so convincing, since they had not received the approval of the entire Diaspora, as had the Mishna and the Gemara, and it is conceivable that, over the length of days and the duration of the exile and the wandering, words that are not from the original authors happened into them, and were attributed to their names, as the Gaon, R. Jacob b. Zvi [Emden, 1697-1776], has noted in his book, *Mitpahat Sefarim* [1768]. And he brought many clear proofs which cannot be questioned. And also about our subject, how can we bring proof from the mentioning of the vowels and the accents in the *Zohar*? Are not the masters of grammar mentioned there, and there is no doubt that they arose after the Geonim, and the first of them is R. Yehudah [b. David] Ḥayyuj [c. 945-c. 1000], as is known?

However, since there is no preference at all for the opinion of R. Elijah Baḥur from our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, the masters of the Talmud, since the later authors who were mentioned rose against him, and set aside and rejected all his evidence, and crushed all his support, upon which he was propped, with straightforward arguments. The words that the author of *Imre Binah* brought from the books of the Kabbalah were sufficient to reject the reasoning of R. Elijah Baḥur.

And by their account, it was acceptable in the words of the wise man, R. Azariah [dei Rossi], in his well known

book, *Pesher Davar*<sup>20</sup>. And I will tell you his opinion of this in different words, and with a slight addition. Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, wrote the Holy Torah without any vowel or accent at all, and he made known the ways of the reading and the transposition of the syllables and the sounds and the pauses in a clear manner. But he did not write the signs in his Torah, even though it was conceivable that some of the things would fall into doubt without them. And he had a important reason for this, for he did not want anyone to understand its commandments without the oral tradition, as the wise Kuzari wrote in section 2, "...and thus Moses began with the simple reading, so that we would begin with it." However, the vowels were also written from that time, according to their kind, in a few books, and especially upon the stones, as in the words of the author of the *Semadar* [Levi b. Joseph],<sup>21</sup> "as it says, 'And you shall write [upon the stones all the words of this law] very plainly...' [Deut. 27:8] which, without the vowels, the reader could not understand, and who would explain them there, on the bank of the river?" And furthermore, Israel continued to use them also among the multitudes, and in their secular matters, in the pure Hebrew language. Every one of them knew and understood the points and the accents of the Torah, and could grasp without difficulty that which is described by them according to its simple meaning, for

they were accustomed to these matters daily. And one who heard the reading of the Torah once or twice from his father or teacher, would keep the matter of the verses and the quality of the sounds without need to study and to scrutinize their writing with meticulous supervision and exactness and great trouble, like the man needs, who has not tried and is not accustomed to these matters from the breast of his mother, and his school.

And it is possible that, at that time, individuals did not write all the points and accents on each and every word in books that they wrote for themselves, as we do today; but rather, only in the place where it was needed. And sometimes they omitted them from the side of custom; it was easy for them to read and to understand the matter without these signs. And when they were exiled to Babylon, and they forgot their language, and forsook the Torah and its reading, it is conceivable that the vowels were also forgotten, until Ezra came and gave them by his hand the translation of the Torah, in the language which they used then, which was the Aramaic language in the Assyrian script. And he returned the points and established them on their base. And behold, his whole intention was that by means of the translation of the Torah, in the language understood among them, they would understand also the matter of the Scriptures in the Holy Tongue, and give their attention and study and exactness to the

accentuation and punctuation marks. And since they read the translation of the Torah in the Assyrian script, they became used to this upright writing, which they had forgotten until his days, and they also knew how to read the Hebrew language. However, who could breathe the breath of life into a dead language, forgotten from the living? They already needed close study and extra diligence and great reflection, to know the ways of the language and its matters. And thus it is not conceivable without individuals, guardians of the Torah, who kept watch at its doors day by day. But the majority of the people also continued, all the days of the Second Temple, to use the Aramaic language or Greek with words of Torah, as we will mention again below. And the points became ever more lacking, only known to a few, these are the distinguished persons; in a manner that one should not be surprised that some doubt should fall on a few words, as our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, mentioned. After the conclusion of the Gemara (as the Bahur wrote), the sages of Tiberias or others who knew them, saw that it was good to make the manner of the proper reading as a kind of fence and hedge, by setting up marks and signs according to the number of the letters and the words and the verses and the portions, and a remembrance of all the strange changes which fell upon the points and the accents, and by this they set the Torah and the Scripture upon their stand. And it was

a great understanding of God in his pity on our remnant to give us in his Torah and commandments a prop and a support, until the time for the love comes, and the canopy of David is raised from the dust, and He says to the daughter of Zion, "arise on your feet and live". And he will also send his spirit to the upright language, to cause it to live and to return to its base, like the first ordinance.

And also in the matter of the *Qere* and the *Ketiv* it appears that the matter is similar. Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, only wrote the *Ketiv* in his Torah, but when he passed it to Joshua, he read it before him according to the *Qere* and made known to him the secret of the exchange between them. And from him the matter from was translated from man to man by mouth. And about this our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said, in Nedarim, chapter *Ein Bein* (37b) "...words read but not written and written but not read are a law of Moses from Sinai...". For thus they heard the reading from the mouth of Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, the source of the true tradition. And our rabbis, may their memories be blessed, mentioned not only "...the words read but not written and the words written but not read..." but the *Qere* and the *Ketiv* in general, for in every place where the *Qere* is different from the *Ketiv*, behold the *Ketiv* is written, but not read, and the *Qere* is read but not written.

For example, it is written, "*hana'ar*" [the young man]; but "*hana'arah*" is read. Behhold, "*hana'ar*" is written but not read, and "*hana'arah*" is read but not written, and all this is a law of Moses from Sinai. And our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, read the *Qere* as Scripture and the *Ketiv* as *masorah*.

And behold, it is plausible that also in the first days, there were individuals who feared the forgetting, that the changes they heard from the mouths of their teachers should not be forgotten, for the exchange of the *Qere* and *Ketiv* are not necessary in the language, until the master of the language knows them himself, or they leave his heart, as some of the authors thought (See what our teacher and master R. Jacob b. Hayyim [c. 1470-1538] said in his introduction to the *Miqra Gedolah*). For if they came to a certain meaning, it is possible that it would be forgotten. And in order to be saved from this, they wrote the *Qere* on the scroll of the books which were in their hands, and set the marks for the benefit of the memory alone, until Ezra and his co-workers arose, and after him the Masoretes, generation after generation, who checked all the changes and transpositions they found in the books. And they scrutinized with great scrutiny and much supervision each and every word and letter, and according to the inspected books in their hands, they removed every error and mistake that had not

been inspected, and in the place where doubt came among the inspected books themselves, they followed the majority, according to the ordinance the Torah, "...turning aside after a multitude..." [Ex. 23:21]. And thus it is found in *Masekhet Soferim* (Chapter 6, Law 4), "R. Shimon b. Lakish said, three books were found in the courtyard, the *Ma'onah* scroll, the *Za'atute* scroll, and the *Hu* scroll. In one they found 'ma'on' written, and in two, '...the eternal God is your dwelling place [*ma'onah*]...' [Deut. 33:27]. And they upheld the two and rejected the one. In another of the scrolls they found 'And he sent the nobles [*za'atute*] of the children of Israel...' written, and in the other two they found 'And he sent the young men [*na'are*] of the children of Israel...' [Ex. 24:5] And they upheld the two and rejected the one. In one '*Hu*' was written eleven times, and in two they found '*Hi*' written eleven times, and they upheld the two and rejected the one." Thus far its words.

And they transmitted the signs about every deletion and addition and exchange and *Qere* and *Ketiv*, and they wrote all these signs on the scrolls of individual books, or in a special pamphlet, according to the order of the alphabet, and this is the scrolled Masorah and the arranged Masorah. And they made this a fence and a faithful guarding for our Holy Torah, so that it is impossible for the Torah to be reformulated in any way, even the tip of a *Yod*. And all the

days of heaven upon earth, it is guarded and arranged in our hands, and it will never be forgotten from the mouth of our seed.

#### About the Translations

One who transfers literature from the language of one people to the language another is called a translator [metargem] (*verdolmetscher*) and the noun which is derived from it is called *meturgeman*, [e.g.] "...for there was an interpreter [*hamelits*] between them," (Gen. 42:23), [is interpreted by Onkelos] "...for there was an interpreter [meturgeman] between them" [*ibid.*], "...he shall be a mouth [*lepeh*] for you..." (Ex. 4:16), "...he shall be a *turgeman* for you..." [*ibid.*]. And it occurs occasionally in the first language in which the words are said, "...[the words were written] in Aramaic and [it was] translated [*umeturgam*] (Ezra 4[:10]) (in German, *vorgetragen*). And behold the translator makes known the meaning of the literature in the language of the other people, and the commentator or explainer also makes known the meaning of the sentence, but

the explainer uses synonymous phraseology in the very same language that the first speaker used. For example, "In the beginning God created..." [Gen. 1:1], the commentator or explainer would say, "In the beginning the Master of all the powers brought from nothingness to existence...", and his intention is to explain the meaning of the sentence in substituted and synonymous words which are more easily understood by the hearer or reader. But the translator would speak in the language of another people (*Im Anfange schuf Gott...*).

It is impossible, even for the most perfect translator of his craft, to make known the meaning of the speaker in brevity and exactness, without any addition, or deletion, or change at all. And the matter is known to every enlightened man who understands the ways of the languages, and the great difference that is between them. The meanings of the most parallel words in two languages are not entirely comparable. And the majority are similar only in their primary and essential meaning, and they differ vastly in their subordinate and occasional meaning. For example, the word *enosh* [man], in German, *Mensch*; these words are similar in their essential meaning, since they teach about a living, speaking being. However, in the Holy Tongue, this word [*enosh*] has a subordinate meaning, which is found in the words, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and

desperately corrupt [*ve'enush*]..." (Jer. 17:9), which is not the case with the word *Mensch* in the German language. Therefore, the person who translates from the Holy Tongue to German, if, in every case, he translates *enosh* as *Mensch*; he would not have completely said the meaning of the word, and sometimes, when the speaker intended this subordinate meaning, he would need it for the matter of the style which he desires. And if the translator expands and says in German *geplagter Mensch*; with this too he departs from the intention of the first speaker, since sometimes it is necessary not to interpret this subordinate meaning explicitly, but rather to allude to it.

And if you are very exacting, you will find in each word in one language, that the matter that is in it will be different and unique, not only from all the words that are in that language, but also from all those words by which you might think to translate them to another language, even if, at first glance, it appears that it compares to them with a completely similar meaning. The words of the sentence also have a special order in each language, and it is impossible for the translator, when he needs to change the order of the words, one after the other, [to translate] according to the nature of the language into which he translates, without also changing somewhat their meaning and action upon the soul of the listener. As it is known by every man

enlightened in the attributes of the soul, each order has a specific action which another does not have. For example, it is written, "...If they have come out for peace, take them alive; or if they have come out for war, take them alive." (1 Kgs. 20:18). Here, the word "take them [tīsum] is a verb [po'al] (*Verbum*), and the word "alive" [ḥayyim] is an adverb [to'ar hapo'al] (*Adverbium*). And in the Holy Tongue, sometimes the verb precedes its description, and sometimes, the description precedes the verb, according to what is the essence of the meaning of the speaker. Since the force of this sentence, and the essence of the meaning of the speaker, is known from the order of the words; one time he says, "take them alive [tīsum ḥayyim]," and one time he says, "alive take them [ḥayyim tīsum]," for "if they come out for peace" there is nothing special about the fact that they should not kill them, however, in spite of this, he commands to "take them." Therefore he said "take them" first, which is the main part of the meaning, but "if they have come out for war," without doubt they should be taken, but in spite of this, he commands that they be alive, therefore he says, "take them alive [ḥayyim tīsum]."

And what does the translator do if the ways of the language to which he is translating are completely opposite to this order, and they force him to place the adverb before the verb, or the opposite? If he translates the sentence

word by word, the listener will not understand it at all. And what difference is there in German between *ergreift sie lebendig* and *lebendig ergreift sie*, except that it is contrary to the ways of the German language to speak thus? And if he increases the words, and adds to the words of the first speaker, in order to make his meaning clear, the beauty of the sentence and its action upon the soul are destroyed.

And thus all the languages differ one from another in the ways of the phraseology, and each one of them has unique characteristics, which the others don't have. And, therefore, if you translate the sentence literally, word by word, to another language, sometimes a speaker of that language will not understand it at all. And even if, perhaps, he comprehends the main part of the meaning, he will not feel in it the pleasantness of the phraseology, and its value is not as it is in the first language from which it was translated.

Behold, the translator who was the most praised by our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, was Onkelos the proselyte; and he too needed, on many occasions, to change, to add, to delete, and to alter the order of the words, according to the ways of the language which he used. And these are the words of R. Elijah Bahur, in his introduction to the book, *Meturgeman*, "And behold, the translators do not

always keep the way of the grammar, and they translate the past tense to the future tense, and the future to the past tense, and thus the present tense sometimes to the past or to the future." And thus the infinitive, with *bet* or *kaf* of the four prepositional prefixes; in the majority of cases, they translate it in the past or sometimes in the future. And sometimes, they translate the verse according to what is suitable in the language of translation, and not after the language of the Scriptures. And thus wrote Rashi many times, and these are his words, "And Onkelos set the word according to its character, and was not exacting with the language of the Scriptures. And there are words which they do not translate at all, only the meaning alone, for example, '...with only my staff...' (Gen. 32:11), 'for alone' [Tg. Onq. *ibid.*]. And thus, '...for their worm shall not die...' (Isa. 66:24), '...their soul shall not die...' [Tg. Neb. *ibid.*]. And there are words which they translate as the obverse of their meaning, like, '...I will not go up among you...' [Ex. 33:31], and thus, '...he did not go, as at other times, to look for omens...' (Num. 24:1), see there.<sup>22</sup> And sometimes they translate according to what is fitting in the Aramaic language, not after the language of the Scriptures, and there is no difference in meaning between them, as in, '...the people of Israel went out with a raised hand' (Ex.

14:8), 'with an uncovered head' [Tg. Onk. *ibid.*], for thus they were accustomed to describe in Aramaic the thing a man does before all without fear. And thus, "...with the edge of the sword...", [Num. 21:24] the translation is "...according to the law of the war...", [Tg. Onq. *ibid.*] for thus they are accustomed in the Aramaic language, but these are the extremes of the ways of the translators." Thus far his words. And in truth, the one who wishes to add examples and proofs about this from the translation of Onkelos the proselyte, should read one section from the sections of the Torah, whichever he wishes, and he should study the translation, and he will find that these things are true and straightforward.

And how many of these words did this pious man have to change in order keep personification [of the deity] far away, as the author of the *Moreh* noted in his book, and his praise because of this is fitting for him? And, sometimes, words which have no tinge of personification in the Holy Tongue, according to the base of this excellent language, if you were to translate them word by word into another language, you might lean toward personification, God forbid. Therefore he added or changed, from time to time, in order to be guarded from every snare, as is known to the one who studies it.

Behold, you see that the faithful translator needs to

make a change occasionally, to add, or to delete, or to change the order of the sentence, in order to make known the meaning of the speaker. And you find no-one who destroys the meaning or harms it more than the one who preserves words, who translates literally, and word by word, even when it appears at first glance that he is the most faithful and zealous in his work. And because of this, our sages, may their memory be blessed, derided, in several places, the one who explains the text according to its appearance. And the meaning is about one who preserves the words, and translates or explains word by word, without any change or difference at all, even when the ways of the language compel him to preserve the meaning and to reject the words. And a translator of this sort is called a liar, for he appears to translate faithfully, since he does not omit a word that he did not translate, yet he is a deceiver, for in this way the matter is lost, and the meaning is confused. And thus, our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said, in the chapter [entitled] *Ha'ish Meqadesh* [Qidd. 49a], and at the end of the *Tosephta to Megilah* [L. 228], "anyone who translates a verse according to its appearance, behold, this one is a liar.

And behold, as long as the children of Israel did not change their language, and the language of the lovely Land was accustomed and fluent in the mouths of the multitude,

from small to great, they did not need a translation of the Torah. And one who heard from the mouth of a reader who was exacting with the vowels, the melody and the accents, as is fitting, understood, on his own, the meaning of the sentence according to its literal meaning, for they were accustomed to using phrases, sounds and accents similar to these in all their affairs and needs. And in the place where one did not grasp the meaning of the Scriptures, one needed an explanation, which is an interpretation of the matter, in different phrases, in the Holy Tongue itself, not a translation in the language of strange people. And if a man was able to draw from the wells of living waters, why would he hew for himself broken cisterns?

However, when they were exiled to Babylon, they were mixed among the nations to take foreign women and they forgot their language, according to the testimony of the Scriptures, "In those days I also saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab; and half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but the language of each people" (Neh. 13:[23-24]). And even though the days of the exile in Babylon were only a number of years, and did not approach the days of the slavery of Egypt, during which the of Israel preserved their language (for they were in Babylon only for seventy years), despite all this, they forgot the language

of their fathers in this exile, on account of the foreign women which they took, for they taught their language to their children which they bore. Also, the language of the people that ruled over them in Babylon was closer to the Holy Tongue than the Egyptian language, and it was more suitable for the confusion and mixing of the phraseology (as we see every day, the men of Italy who live in France forget their language in a short time, and thus the sons of Germany who are exiled to Holland or Sweden, which is not the case with languages that are distant, one from the other. And our brothers, the children of Israel, who were exiled from Germany to Poland, still have not forgotten the German language entirely, even if the pronunciation has become corrupt over the length of time), to the point that they became accustomed to speak the language of their captors, and the treasure of the Holy Tongue remained only with the remnant of the sages of the generation, who constantly study the Torah of God. And also, after that, when they went up to Jerusalem, not only a few of them went up, "The whole assembly together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, besides their manservants and maidservants..." (Ezra 2:64[-65]). But the craftsman and the locksmith and the majority of the sages, who saw that this was not the repose and the true redemption which had been attested for us by the mouths of all the prophets of God, stayed in Babylon.

And when Ezra and his co-workers saw that the Holy Tongue had been forgotten from the multitude of Israel, they rose and translated the Torah for them in the Aramaic language, to which they had become accustomed, and which they used in all their affairs, as our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said, "...the Torah was again given to Israel in the days of Ezra in the Aramaic language" [cf. b. Sanh. 21b]. And thus they said [that the word] *meforash* meant the translation. And it was his intention that they would understand the Scriptures by means of this translation, and they would become enlightened in the ways of the language which was forgotten among them, and they would again study it, for by this method a man learns to understand another language to which he was not accustomed. And they established the prayer of the Eighteen Benedictions for them, in the Holy Tongue, so that they would be ordered and arranged in the mouths of all, since from the days of Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, to Ezra, every one would pray and increase his supplication and petition according to his ability. Some would pray once a day, and some would pray many times, according to how his heart would arouse him to pour out its speech, whether with thanks and praise to God, since He had rewarded him well, or with his relating before Him his injury and his sickness and his sorrow. And they did not need a formula at all, for there is

no fine talker like the heart which is aroused on its own, and the ways of the language were known to all. However, they now needed a set and regulated formula, as Maimonides, may his memory be blessed, wrote (*Hilkhot Tefilah* 1:4), "When they were exiled in the days of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, they were intermingled in Persia and Greece, and the rest of the peoples, and children were born to them in these lands, and the language of these children was confused, and the language of each one was mixed from many languages, and when one spoke, one was not able to express oneself sufficiently in one language, except in solecistically, as it is said, '...and half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod etc' (Neh. 13:24) '...and they could not speak the language of Judah, but the language of each people' [*ibid.*]. And because of this, when one of them prayed, his language would be insufficient to ask his desires or to express praise of the Holy One, praised be He, in the Holy Tongue, until other languages became mixed in with it. And when Ezra and his court saw this, they rose and established the Eighteen Benedictions for them, according to the order; the first three are praise of God, the last three are thanksgiving, and the middle ones contain requests of all the things which are like the fundamentals of all the desires of every man, and all the needs of the community, so that they would be arranged in

the mouth of all, and they would learn them, and the prayer of the stammerers would be a complete prayer, like the prayer of the purist linguist." Thus far his words.

However, when the hand of the Greeks conquered them, they quickly turned and rejected the Aramaic language also, for they always learned the language of the people which conquered and ruled them, and a few of them mixed and confused the languages one with another, and did not try the way of any one of them, as was fitting. And in this way, they also forgot the translation which Ezra and his co-workers had set for them. Or it became confused and complicated in the mixing of the languages and therefore it became corrupted with them, until Onkelos, the righteous proselyte arose, in the days of R. Eliezer and R. Yehoshua, the disciples of R. Yohanan b. Zakay, after the destruction of the [Second] Temple. And he again established the translation for Israel, which had been forgotten among them. And thus said our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, (Meg. 3a) "R. Jeremiah said, or some say R. Hiyya b. Abba, 'The translation of the Torah was written by Onkelos the proselyte under the supervision of R. Eliezer and R. Yehoshua'..." And they found "the translation of the Torah was written by Onkelos the proselyte.." difficult, "Did not R. Iqa say in the name of R. Hanana'el, who said in the name of Rav, why is it written, 'And they read from the book,

from the law of God, clearly; and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading' [Neh. 8:8]? 'And they read from the book, from the law of God...:' this is Scripture, '...clearly...:' this is translation, '...and they gave the sense...:' these are the [division into] verses, '...so that the people understood the reading...:' this is the accentuation, or some say, these are the Masorah. These had been forgotten and they re-established them."

And after that a certain Greek proselyte arose, called Aqilas, or Aquila, from the island of Pontus, which is in the Mediteranean sea. And he, too, translated the Torah into the Greek language before R. Eliezer and R. Yehoshua. And thus it is found in the Jerusalem Talmud, in the first chapter of Megilah, "...about that which is taught in a *baraita*, that R. Shimon b. Gamaliel said, they only permitted Greek to be written even in books. R. Hiyya said, Aqilas the proselyte translated the Torah before R. Eliezer and R. Yehoshua, and Rabbi praised him, and they said, "the fairest of the sons of men."

And the author of *Ibre Binah* (chapter 45) [Azariah dei Rossi] wrote that this was fitting praise for him, since this description of beauty is related from them, may their memory be blessed, to the Greek language, which they called, in the first chapter of Megilah [9b], "the beauty of Japheth

[*yefiuto shel yaphet*]." And he expanded there with true and enduring proofs from the words of our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, in several places, that Aquilas is not Onkelos, and that the translation of Aquilas was in the foreign language of Greek, which was the language of his people, and not like a few of the authors thought, that these two names, Onkelos and Aquilas are synonymous for one man. See there in the entire chapter.

And thus it is also found in our day, that the Greek translation of the entire Torah is attributed to Aquila from the island of Pontus. And our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, mentioned that Aquila was from the island of Pontus, and this is in *Torat Kohanim* [*Sifra debe Rav*], chapter, *Behar Sinay* [ed. Weiss, 106c], and these are its words, "...that are in your land..." [Lev. 25:7], they eat what is in your land, not that which Aquilas brought out for his slaves to Pontus". And they mention there, that after they warned him about this, he ceased doing it, and no longer brought forbidden produce out of the land, for he listened to the words of our sages, may their memory be blessed. And it is conceivable that the intention of R. Eliezer and R. Yehoshua, may their memory be blessed, to benefit also those of the multitude of Israel who did not know Aramaic, and who used the Greek language. Therefore, they commanded this sage, who was learned in the Holy

Tongue, and who spoke a pure Greek, to translate the Torah before them to the language of his people, as had Onkelos the proselyte before him, to the Aramaic language.

Yonatan b. Uziel was one of the students of Hillel the Elder, in the eighth century of the fourth millenium, about one hundred years before the destruction of the Second Temple, and our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said about him that he translated the prophets from the mouth of Hagai, Zechariah, and Malachi. And the meaning, as our master, R. Samuel Edels [1555-1631], wrote in *Hidushey Agadot*, is that the translation was received by him from these prophets through his teachers, for he certainly did not see these prophets, who were at the beginning of the Second Temple. And our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, did not mention a thing about his translation of the Torah, and we learn from this that he did not translate the Torah at all, even though he was a long time before Onkelos. And thus wrote our master, R. Samuel Edels, in *Hidushey Agadot*, that Yonatan was not anxious to translate the Torah. See the reason, there. And if so, the translation that is in our hands, which is attributed to Yonatan b. Uziel, is not from this early one, and it is conceivable that another man whose name is similar compiled it, and this was some time after the destruction of the Second Temple. And thus it appears from several pieces of evidence, since this translator

mentioned several things that did not exist and were not yet born in those days. For example, "*Girbanya*" and "*Tarqay*," which are *Deutschland und Turkei* ([Tg. Ps.-J.] Gen. 10:2), "...six orders of the Mishnah..." ([Tg. Ps.-J.] Ex. 26:9), "Constantinople," ([Tg. Ps.-J.] Num. 24:29) and it is a well known thing that Emperor Constantine did not name this city after himself until three hundred years after the destruction of the Temple, and, originally, its name was Byzantium. And he mentions Lombardy (*ibid.* v. 24), but the Lombards did not wage war with the citizens of Italy until almost six hundred years after the destruction of the Temple, which was several generations after Hillel the Elder. Were it not that you wish to say that he wrote all this from the mouth of Hagai, Zechariah, and Malachi, as our sages, may their memory be blessed, mentioned about his translation of the Prophets, and thus the one who has a palate to taste will sense the great difference between the pure language which is in the translation of the Prophets and the language which has been mixed with several foreign words, which are in the translation of the Torah that is attributed to Yonatan b. Uziel. And does he not also follow the way of the earlier translators, to translate the meaning of the original verse according to its literal meaning, but he adds to the words of the Scriptures and expands it with explanations and homilies and allusions until the reader

becomes weary to know how to find what Moses said and what Yonatan added to it? This is not what Onkelos the proselyte did, or Yonatan b. Uziel himself in his translation of the Prophets, or the rest of the translators who are left for us from those days. Onkelos, especially, did not deviate from the way of the first literal meaning, except in a case of great compulsion, for the need of the true understanding, and to remove every obstacle, in a place where it was possible to err. And even though Yonatan b. Uziel, in his translation of the Prophets, expands somewhat, and adds to the words of Scriptures, sometimes as an added explanation, in any event, it is not similar to the translation of the Torah of Yonatan b. Uziel, which only follows the literal meaning of the Scriptures in a few places, and adds to the rest with homilies and stories to the extent that, even if they are true, it is not for the translator to combine them with the words of the Holy Torah, especially if there was, in his day, no translation of the Torah according to its literal meaning, since the translation of Ezra and the men of the Great Assembly was lost at the end of those days, as we have mentioned. And from all this, it appears that the translation that is found in printed books is not from Yonatan b. Uziel, the student of Hillel, but rather from some sage whose name is similar.

And further, it appears that this is the Targum

Yerushalmi that is printed with it, or rather that they discovered two books from that translation, and in a place where both of them agreed, the printers left it out of the Targum Yerushalmi, and they only left it in where the versions were different. And therefore you will find that the Targum Yerushalmi does not always translate the entire portion, but only one or two verses, or sometimes half a verse or one word from it, and you will see that it always agrees with the translation of Yonatan b. Uziel in character and differs from it in the version of the language. This is exactly as I have mentioned, that they are two versions of one book. And further, a kind of proof about this is that all the first authors, the author of the *Arukh*, the Alfasi, and Nachmanides, mention this translation by the name of *Targum Yerushalmi*, or *Targum Erets Yisrael*, except the sage [Menaḥem b. Benjamin] Recanati [late 13th early 14th cent.] mentions Yonatan b. Uziel on several verses of the Torah, and on some of the verses he mentions *Targum Yerushalmi*, as the author of *Imre Binah* notes in his name (chapter 9). And thus this author, R. Azariah, saw, in a manuscript, two translations of the Torah that were completely similar, word by word. And over the first was written that it was the translation of Yonatan b. Uziel, and [over] the second was written *Targum Yerushalmi*. And it appears that the scribes who copied [these works] found the abbreviation *Taw"Yod*, and

some of them understood it as *Targum Yonatan*, and some of them, *Targum Yerushalmi*, and both of them are one, compiled by a sage of the sages of Israel, at least around six hundred years after the destruction (for then the Lombards were known and famous, and the Turks were in the world). And he saw and knew the translation of Onkelos, which follows the literal meaning of the Scriptures, and he chose another way to make the homilies and the charming and dear stories known also, which are found in the Midrashim of our sages, may their memory be blessed, in order to arouse the heart of the one who reads in the Torah, to grasp the simple meaning and not let his hand rest from the homily, and the one who fears heavens goes with both. And I know that it is possible to respond to all these arguments, for there is no objective path in matters like this, also, the tradition does not mention these, and everyone of Israel is allowed to choose the way which is right and good in his eyes, according to his opinion and his reason. And I wrote what appeared to my eyes.

The aforementioned Aqilas was not the first Greek translator, for the well-known *Translation of the Seventy* [Septuagint] was already present in his days, and still also other translations in this language. Our sages, may their memory be blessed, mentioned the act of interpretation that was done by the Elders at the command of Ptolemy the King in

the first chapter of Megilah (9a), "It is taught in a *baraita*, the act of Ptolemy the King who convened seventy-two Elders, and put them into seventy-two houses, and did not reveal to them why he had convened them. He went in to each one and said, 'Write the Torah of Moses your teacher for me'. The Holy One, praised be He, gave advise to the mind of each one, and they all agreed to one opinion, and wrote for him, 'God created in the beginning' [Gen. 1:1:] (Rashi and Tosafot interpreted that they could not say there were two powers, the subject being 'beginning' and the object being 'God'), 'I will make man in an image and a likeness' [instead of "Let us make man...", Gen. 1:26], 'And He finished on the sixth [day] and rested on the seventh' [instead of "And on the seventh day God finished..." Gen. 2:2], '...male and female He created him' [instead of "...He created them..." Gen. 5:2], 'I will descend and I will confuse their language there' [instead of "Let us go down..." Gen. 11:7], 'And Sarah laughed among her relatives' [instead of "So Sarah laughed to herself..." Gen. 18:12], 'In their anger they killed an ox, and in their wrath they dug up a stall' [instead of "In their anger they slay men, in their wantonness, they hamstring oxen..." Gen. 49:6], '...and he caused them to ride on a carrier of man' [instead of "...and he set them on an ass..." Ex. 4:20], '...in Egypt and in the rest of the lands four hundred and thirty years'

[instead of "...in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years..." Ex. 12:40], 'And he sent the elect of the children of Israel' [instead of "...and he sent the young men of the people of Israel..." Ex. 24:5], 'And against the elect of the children of Israel...' [instead of "And against the chief men..." Ex. 24:11], 'I have not taken one valuable from them' [instead of "...I have not taken one ass..." Num. 16:15], 'God distributed them to give light to all the peoples' [instead of "God allotted to all the peoples..." Deut. 4:19], '...which I commanded not to serve them' [instead of "...which I have forbidden..." Deut. 17:31],<sup>23</sup> And in place of 'the hare [*arnevet*]' [Lev. 11:6], they wrote, 'the slender footed,' for Arnevet was the name of the wife of Ptolemy, so he would not say, 'The Jews have made fun of me by writing [the name of] my wife in the Torah'.<sup>24</sup> Thus far its words.

And this is the *baraita* of the *Mekhilta*, *Bo El Par'oh* (chapter 14), they also taught it in Tractate *Soferim* [35a], with a slight change in the version, and it appears from the words of our sages, may their memory be blessed, that the Elders wrote the Torah for the king in the Holy Tongue, and also its translation in the Greek language, for if they had only written the translation by itself, they would not have needed to change 'In the beginning God created,' for there

is no room for this error in the Greek language, as is known to every beginner. And thus, they would not have needed to change the word 'hare' [*arnevet*], for the reason that the name of the wife of King Ptolemy was Arnevet, or, according to the version of the Jerusalem [Talmud] in the first chapter of Megilah, this was the name of the mother of Ptolemy, for the name of the animal in Greek is *Lagos*, were it not that you could say that they also were afraid to write *Lagos*, for this reason, that the name of the father of the king was *Batalmius Lagos*.

And behold, Aristeas the Greek wrote a complete essay on this translation, in Greek, and it was translated by R. Azariah Min Ha'adumim [de' Rossi] to the purest and clearest Holy Tongue, and he called it *Hadrat Zeqenim*, and this is the second book of that precious book, *Me'or 'Eynayim*, printed in Mantua, 5334 [1573-1575]. According to the aforementioned Greek story, the king, *BATALMIUS PHILADELPHUS* was aroused by *DEMETRIUS*, a man of *FALIRIO*, who was clerk of the king over the great synagogue that was in Alexandria of Egypt, to bring also the Torah of the Jews to the beautiful library where he collected and brought together almost five hundred thousand volumes. And this king proclaimed freedom for all the Jews who were in his land, and gave ransom money for them, and sent a great and expensive present to the High

Priest Eliezer, to Jerusalem, and he requested from him that he send six extraordinary men from each tribe, who know how to translate the Torah to the Greek language, and he did just that. And this Greek author told at length about all the precious things that were done by these translators at the command of the king. And remember that they had in their hands a Torah of God written on parchment in gilt letters, and there were isolated on a remote island, and they finished the work of the translation in seventy-two days. And they preserved this order, for each man translated each part of the Torah alone, and afterward they prepared all the translations together, and the version that was pleasing and acceptable to all was brought to the library by the aforementioned Demetrius, the keeper of the king's books. And if we believe the words of this Greek, he himself was then in Alexandria, present at this occurrence, and he copied his stories from the writings of the chronicles of the king. [( ) And [the same is] also [true] of Josephus, for the Romans, book 12, chapter 2 of the *Antiquities*.) And Yedidiah the Alexandrian, commonly called Philo, related this occurrence similarly to the words of the aforementioned Aristeeas, with a slight change and abbreviation of the matters, so that, as it appears, they took most of the words from that Greek book.

And know that all the words of this author are suspect in the eyes of the later authors as falsehoods, lies, and exaggerations, and they said that they contradict one another, and contradict the more well known and accepted histories. And other authors defend him and support his testimony, and there are many arguments from both sides. And as it appears, one cannot deny the testimony of the *Antiquities* about this, and especially, the testimony Yedidiah [Philo], who was one of the citizens of Alexandria itself, the city in which the work of this translation was done, about three hundred years after those elders. And the testimony of several Christian sages, who lived in the days of the first Tannaites, all agree generally about the stories of Aristeas, even if they differ over the particulars. And it is well known that over the course of time, the difference of authors over the particular does not harm the faithfulness of the broader picture. And thus the author of *Imre Binah* decided in chapter 4, and he detailed the words of the early authors on this matter, their agreement and their difference. And he wrote further, "It should not be problematic in your eyes that our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said that Ptolemy convened them, and did not let them know why he convened them, and according to the writings of the aforementioned authors,

that when he wrote to Eliezer the High Priest to send them, he let them know why he convened them. For behold, our sages, may their memory be blessed, in their desire to make their words brief, did well to observe the situation, and since, after the coming of these Elders, he separated them, and they were not able to take counsel together, as it is said, is this not like one who does not let them know why they were called?" Thus far his words. And thus our sages, may their memory be blessed, said, the Holy One, praised be He, gave one advise to the mind of all, but the Greek wrote that they prepared the translations together, and chose the version that was pleasing and acceptable to all. There is no contradiction in this according to my opinion. Since, according to the testimony of Aristeeas, they took counsel together at the place of the officer of the library, Demetrius, and discussed the matter of the translation, this sage heard their words, and negotiated with them. Therefore in those places where they changed the words of the Scriptures, the Holy One, praised be He, performed a miracle for them, in that they agreed to one advise, so that their words would not be suspect as false in the eyes of this sage. But despite all this, it is possible that they differed in the explanation of the meaning of the Scriptures, the accents, or the choice of the phraseology which was more

pleasant in the Greek language, so that they argue with convincing reasons and proofs, leaving the one with the strongest argument victorious, and the officer did not suspect them because of this of being false witnesses. And furthermore, it appears that if they all agreed, word by word, without any difference at all, they would have been suspect in his eyes. For he would not have believed that the hand of God had done this. And it is impossible for the act of man to agree as closely as this, had they not taken counsel and communicated together, and he would have determined that they had spoken one with the other, or that the translation was known and famous to them all, before the commandment of the king came to them.

And in Tractate *Soferim*, the first chapter [35a], our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, noted again another Greek translation made by Ptolemy before the act of the aforementioned seventy-two Elders. They said, "It happened that five Elders wrote a Greek Torah for King Ptolemy, and this day was as hard on Israel as the day when the calf was made, for the Torah could not be translated satisfactorily". And afterwards, they again said, "It happened that King Ptolemy convened seventy-two elders etc.". And thus it is understood from the words of the officer of the library, Demetrius, and his petition to Ptolemy Philadelphus which is

written in the beginning of the book, *Hadrat Zeqenim*, that some of the words of the Torah had been translated for them from of old, but the translation was not accurate, and doubtful. And thus testified Aristobulus, a Jewish man, as the authors mention in his name\* in the second chapter to Ptolemy, and these are his words, "Plato accepted, in many ways, the Law of Moses, since since it is clearly recognizable that he understood many of its specifics, since the books of Moses were translated before Demetrius, and also before Alexander, and before the kingdom of the Persians, and many things they took out from them, like the philosopher Pythagoras had also done, however, it was not completely translated, until the days of King Batalmius who was called Philadelphus, for then it was done because of the zealousness of the sage, Demetrius, by the command of the king". Thus far his words.

\*This is the Aristobulus who wrote for King Ptolemy, who was called Ptolemy Philometer [186?-145 B.C.E.], a long essay in the Greek language on the Law of Moses, containing one hundred chapters, but it was lost over the course of time, and nothing remains from it except a few references that appear in the writings of other authors, and the author of *Imre Binah* heard that this essay is in the library in the city of Florence.

And know that this beautiful library of the kings of Egypt in Alexandria, in which the translation of the aforementioned Elders was preserved, was completely burned when they pursued Pompilus who fled there to take refuge under the protection of Cleopatra. And the authors of the history of Rome said that more than seven hundred thousand books were lost in that fire.

Whether the Greek translation which is found in our hand today, and which is known by the name, *Translation of the Seventy*, is truly from those Elders, has been covered by the flames which burned the library. It is necessary to say that the proofreaders have already taken care of it, since only four of the thirteen changes which our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, noted in Megilah and in Tractate Sanhedrin, remain. And these are the specific passages: "and He finished on the sixth and rested on the seventh," "and he made them ride on a carrier of men," "...where they and their fathers dwelt, in the land of Canaan," "And I did not take one of their valuables from them," and the rest are not there. However, in their place are found immeasurable changes and differences, which the author of *Ibre Binah* noted in detail in chapter eight of his book. And thus this translation also includes the Prophets and the Hagiographa,

and from the words of our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, it is understood that the Elders only translated the Torah of Moses. And it must be said that other translators added the Prophets and the Hagiographa. And thus it appears that anyone who has a mind to understand the pleasantness of the Greek language, knows that the language of the Greek translation of the Torah of Moses is sublime and exalted above the language of the translation of the rest of the books, and they are not, therefore, from one author. And Rabbi Azariah, in his book which is mentioned above, thought, about the many changes which come in the translation of the Elders which is in our hands, in words, and vowel points, and accentuation and punctuation, that the Elders did not bring a scroll of Torah in the Holy Tongue with them, but rather the Aramaic translation which had been in their hands from the days of Ezra and his co-workers, and it was transmitted to many, and well-known among them. But the hallowed and excellent language was only known by the remnant, and every man of Israel used either the Aramaic language or the Greek language, as we have mentioned. And many changes and differences had occurred in that translation from the time that Ezra the scribe prepared it to that time, which was more than one hundred years, but since it was so accepted and valuable among a great multitude from Israel

who lived then in Alexandria of Egypt, they thought to do with this what was good in the eyes of the king, they would translate the Torah for him according to it [the Aramaic translation], and they did not change the version of this Aramaic translation, except for those thirteen matters alone, which our sages, may their memory be blessed, mentioned, and they left the rest as they found them. This is the opinion of the sage R. Azariah who is mentioned above.

And therefore it is conceivable that the Samaritans wrote the Torah which is in their hands according to the version of this strange and confused translation, and therefore most of its words agree with the *Translation of the Seventy* which is in our hands. And I have already informed you above that most of the differences and changes which are in the Samaritan version was a result of the mixing of similar letters in the Assyrian script.

In the beginning of the eighth century of the fifth millenium, R. Sa'adya Gaon b. Joseph the Pithomite [882-942] (after the name of his city, Pithom, which is in the area of Fayyum, in the land of Egypt) translated the Five Books of the Torah into the Arabic language, and there are those who attribute a translation of the Prophets and the Hagiagrapha to him, also. And every place where Ibn Ezra mentions the name of the Gaon in his commentary on the Torah, and says

that he translated in the language of Ishmael thus and thus, his intention is to the Gaon, R. Sa'adya, and his aforementioned Arabic translation, and Arabic is called the language of Ishmael by him, for Onkelos translated "...and behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites" (Gen. 37:25) as "...and behold, a caravan of Arabs." Until this day all the nobles and sages of that people speak in the magnificent Arabic language, and they compose all the books of their religion in it, and all the prayers and books of wisdom, as is known. And in those days, the sages of our people who lived under the rule of that people, also used the Arabic language in its purity and beauty, and wrote books in it, not only books of scholarship, ethics, style, and poetry, but also the laws, and the interpretation of the Mishna, and new interpretations of the Talmud, as is known from the books of R. Sa'adya Gaon, and Maimonides, and R. Bahya [ibn Paquda, second half of the 11th century], and the author of the *Kuzari* [Judah Halevi], and the innovations that come in *Shitah Mequbetset* [Betsalel b. Abraham Ashkenazi, c. 1520-1591/1594], which are translated from the Arabic. And it was, therefore, a necessity of the time to translate the Torah into that well-known and current language. And this Arabic translation was printed in Constantinople in the year 306 [1546/7], with the five books of the Torah, and Targum

Onkelos, and the Judeo-Persian translation of R. Jacob. b. Joseph Tavus [16th century] in Assyrian square letters. In the *Polyglot* of Paris, which we mentioned above, they also printed the aforementioned translation of R. Sa'adya, from a manuscript that came into their hands, that agreed with the translation of R. Sa'adya that was printed in 306, as is noted above. Like two versions copied from one book, a difference occasionally occurs in them because of the the scribes who add or delete or change occasionally, on their own opinion, or because of mistakes in the writing. And from there, this translation also came to the *Polyglot* that was printed in London. And the proof that this translation is from R. Sa'adya Gaon is that in both these versions are found all the instances that Ibn Ezra brings in the name of the Gaon. And the scribe of the aforementioned manuscript says, in his introduction, that the author of this translation was an Egyptian priest, and his name was Sa'id from the area of Fayyum. And there is no doubt that he erred or intentionally changed the name of the Gaon R. Sa'adya from Fayyum to this name, which is similar to it. And behold, the Gaon did not translate the Torah literally, but rather, he expanded the sentences, and added explanations to them, in a place where it was fitting for the understanding of the tradition of our sages, may their memory be blessed,

as he himself testified in his introduction, and these are his words, "The one who studies this, my explanation, will be enlightened about every word which I added or deleted, and will come to understand the meaning by it, and by this he will come to several questions and answers which are the foundation of the laws that occur in the Mishna and the Talmud, and the rest of the words of the tradition." Thus far his words.

But several errors and changes in the matter occurred, in which even school children would not err, and there is no doubt that this is the fruit of the thought of the scribe, who thought to add things on his own. For example, "...for am I *in the place [hatahat]* of God..." (Gen. 50:19), he translated: "*Ich fürchte Gott*", as if, "I am terrified [*hataat*] of God" were written. And so also, "[the man] gazed...in silence..." (*ibid.* 24:21), he rendered "*zu trinken verlangte*;" "...treat...as the first born [*levaker*]..." (Deut. 21:16), he rendered as "*vorziehen*", as if "to honor [*lekabed*]" was written. And furthermore, there are several differences which entered the translation of the Gaon which was printed on the Polyglot of Paris and London, which are not in the aforementioned first edition of the year 306. And they came into it from the Septuagint or from the Torah of the Samaritans which we have mentioned; the

Gaon whom we have mentioned has no part in them, therefore, they are not to be relied upon at all. If you wish to know where the arbitrariness of the scribes reached, seek the examples of these differences from the book, *Mevo Hatorah*, of the sage Eichhorn, a professor in Jena (*Einleitung in das Alte Testament von Johann Gottlieb [Gottfried] Eichhorn, Professor zu Jena. Leipzig, 1780*), for there these things are taken up.

In the year 307 [1547/8], a *Humash* with a Spanish and Greek translation was printed in Constantinople. It is not known who composed it, and the rabbis of the city of Ferrara examined this translation and scrutinized its meaning word by word with the words of the Scriptures. And they had it printed by R. Yom Tov Athias [16th cent.] in that city in the year 313 [1553]. And it was printed a third time by R. Manasseh b. Israel [1604-1657], may his memory be blessed, in the year 390 [1630/1] in Amsterdam, with superior proofreading. And after that it was printed many times, by the aforementioned R. Manasseh, in the year 404 [1644/5], and 415 [[1655/6], and by R. Samuel of Qosirish, at the [publishing] house of Joseph Athias [d. 1700], in the year 421 [1661/2], in Amsterdam, and by R. Isaac [de Mattathias] Aboab<sup>25</sup> [1631-1707]. And ten years ago, it was printed at the precious and praiseworthy press of R. Joseph Proops [d. 1786] in Amsterdam, in a large volume, very pleasing and

splendid, nothing can be compared to the beauty of the work of this press in all the books that have been printed up to now.<sup>26</sup>

And the great grammarian, R. Elijah Bahur translated the Torah and the Scrolls to the Judeo-German<sup>27</sup> language completely word by word, and it was printed in Constance which is in the country of Switzerland, in the year 304 [1544/5] . And after that, books of the Tanakh were printed in the Judeo-German language, in Hebrew letters by the translator, R. Yozel [Josef] Witzzenhausen in Amsterdam, in the year 439 [1678/79], and it was printed again in 447 [1687/8], and another Judeo-German translation by the translator, Rabbi Yequtiel [b. Isaac] Blitz [17th cent.] of Wittmund, was also printed in Amsterdam, in the year 439 [1678/79], as above, with the approvals and bans of several of the prominent rabbis of that generation. And behold, R. Yequtiel mentioned, in his introduction, that he had seen the translation which was printed in Constance, and he went to great length to denounce it and declare it unfit, to the point that he decreed that this translation had not come from the hand of the Judeo-German grammarian [i.e. Levital]. However, I, the writer, have never seen the translation attributed to R. Elijah, for it is not distributed in this country at all<sup>28</sup>, but I have seen seen the translation of

the aforementioned R. Yequiel, and I found that it is unfit in its defectiveness. But, if perhaps, the intention was good, and therefore the sages of the generation approved it, his works are generally unacceptable, for he did not know the nature of the Hebrew language, and did not understand the depth of its phrases, and that which he got out of it, he translated into a language of stammerers, very corrupt and perverted. The soul of the reader who knows how to speak purely will abhor it.

And from then until now, no man has set his heart to correct these misdeeds, and to translate the Holy Torah to the proper language which is usual and customary in our generation. And the youth of the children of Israel who have a mind to understand words of wisdom will search far and near for the word of God from the translations of the sages of the Christians, for the Christians have translated the Torah in every generation, in their languages in their nations, as the time demanded, and the regulation of the language, and the loveliness of the phraseology was sometimes according to the words, and sometimes according to the meaning, sometimes word by word, and sometimes with expansions and added explanation, so that it would not be lacking to quench the thirst of their students, according to the want and need of each man. But this route, which many of

the children of our people have trodden, has a multitude of traps and stumbling blocks for pilgrims, and great evil comes from there. For the Christian translators, since they did not have the tradition of our sages, may their memory be blessed, and do not listen to the words of the Masorah, and have not even accepted the points and the accents which are in our hands, make the words of the Torah like a broken wall. Every man rises before it and does what he wants, and they add and delete and change the Torah of God, not only the points and the accents, but also sometimes the letters and the words (for who can control them?) according to the thoughts of their mind and their perception, and as a result, they often do not read in the Torah that which is written there, but rather that which they conceive.<sup>29</sup> And I do not deprecate their sages by this, for what forces them to listen to a tradition they did not receive from their fathers, or to the Masorah, which was not transmitted to them from faithful men among them. They did not even receive the words of the Torah to keep and do all that is written there, but rather like a book of history, to know what happened in ancient days, and to understand the ways of the Divine providence and highest leadership in each generation. And for this benefit, it does no harm if sometimes they changed the particulars, by the addition or subtraction of

letters or words, as they have done in well known and popular secular books, for each and every proofreader makes changes in them according to his desire. But if, however, this is conceivable for the sages of the peoples and their students, for us, the House of Israel, it is not conceivable, since for us, this Torah is a legacy, not for the benefit of memory alone, but to know the commandments which the Lord our God commanded us to learn and to teach, to keep and to do, and it is our life and the length of our days. And so that our lives will not be hung before us on the hair of reason and the thread of understanding alone, our sages, may their memory be blessed, prepared the Masorah for us, and made a fence around the Torah and the commandments as a statute and ordinance, so that we will not grope like the blind in the dark. And therefore, it is not for us to move from their paved road, and to steer the path of life, with out a measure and scales of justice, according to the thought and reckoning of the mind of a grammarian or proofreader, and we do not live from his mouth, but rather, as the Masoretes who are faithful to us have passed to us, thus it was be and thus it will remain, and according to them, we will understand the Scriptures, and give the meaning, and we will investigate and know what is written there, sometimes according to the literal meaning, and

sometimes according to the interpretation of our sages, may their memory be blessed, for both of them are correct as one, as I will explain below, God willing.

And it came to pass, when God granted me children, male sons, and the time arrived to teach them Torah and to teach them diligently the words of the living God, as it is written, I resolved to translate the Five Books of the Torah to the decorous and refined German language, as is customary in our days, for the benefit of the tender children. I placed the translation in their mouths, with the study of the Scriptures, sometimes word by word, sometimes according to the meaning and the continuity of the matter, to educate them in the meaning of the Scriptures, and the style of the language, and the purity of its instruction, that they might grow up and understand it on their own. And the Lord caused the rabbi to appear before me, our master and teacher, R. SOLOMON, may his light shine forth, from Dubno, to teach my only son, who remained to me then (may God strengthen his heart to serve Him and fear Him),<sup>30</sup> one hour a day, in the wisdom of the grammar of the language. And when the aforementioned rabbi saw the translation of the Torah that was in my hands, it found favor in his eyes and pleased him, and he asked me to print it for the benefit of the students, to whom God apportioned for the understanding of a proverb

and a figure [cf. Prov. 1:6]. I agreed with him, but on the condition that he would set his eyes and his mind to comment on every place where I decided in my translation according to the opinion of one of the commentators of the early commentators, or where I turned from the opinion of all of them, to choose for myself another way, pleasing and agreeable to my opinion, with the ways of the language, the continuity of the matter, or the placing of the accent and its reasons. He should search and examine all of these, and discuss with me and write it up, and it would be an explanation of what is written, in an easy language, so that each reader could understand. And I also promised him faithfully to be a help in the compilation and writing of this explanation, to the best of my ability. And I stipulated another condition, that he would allow my brother the rabbi, R. SAUL,<sup>24</sup> may his light shine forth, to participate in the work of the printing and the proper proofreading, and they should take equal wages for their work, except for the reward that is stored up for those who do what is good and honest in the eyes of God, to exalt his Torah, and to magnify it, and to remove the heart of all the youngsters of Israel from the translations with which they have been content up to now. And behold, God Himself knows, that, from the beginning, it did not come to mind, and I

never even hoped to gain financial profit or an increase of honor from this work, and I did not wish to have my name listed on it, were it not that the aforementioned rabbi asked me to do so, in order to increase [the number of] those who desire it, and who spend money from their pocket. For the cost of publication is very great, and he cannot afford it, were it not that my fellow Jews volunteered the offerings to subscribe, and to be his aid.<sup>32</sup>

And our teacher and master, R. Solomon Dubno, agreed to do as I said; he collected and brought together explanations of the Scriptures which were written according to the simple meaning, and its primary meaning, from the books of the heads of the great *Pashṭanim* [Plain Explainers], which are eyes for us in the explanation of the Scriptures. They are: the great light Rashi, may his memory be blessed, who has no equal in any place, who walked in the way of the simple meaning; and his grandson, the Rashbam, may his memory be blessed, who went very deeply in his explanation of the Scriptures, so that out of the love of the *peshaṭ*, he would sometimes deviate from the point of the truth; and Ibn Ezra, may his memory be blessed, who was an expert in all the sciences; and Nachmanides, this is the Nachmanides who did marvelous things in his commentary on the Torah, his language is sweet, and all his words are pleasant. And along

with them is also [R. David] Qimhi, although his explanation of the Torah has not come into our hands, behold, in *Sefer Hashorashim* [The Book of Roots], which he composed, at every root, he explains many verses from the Tanakh. And in every place in my translation where I chose the explanation of one commentator over the others, I made my intention and reason known, whether I followed by this the paths of men of good discernment, or whether the grammar of the work brought me to it, or the continuity of the sentence, or the ways of the language according to the rules that were laid down for me. And thus in every place where the way of the *derash* and the simple meaning differ and are far apart from each other, in my translation, I sometimes followed the way of the *peshat* alone, and sometimes the way of the *derash* alone, and in his explanation, he [i.e. Dubno] made known the for what reason I did this. And we had a set rule in this, to differentiate between a difference and a contradiction. For it is possible for those things that differ to be both true and correct as one, and therefore in those places where the *peshat* only deviates and differs from the *derash*, and is not opposed to it, Scripture does not depart from its *peshat* and the *derashah* can be expounded, for then the *peshat* of the Scripture would be the first and primary meaning, and the *derashah* is the second meaning. The speaker also intended

it, like the linguist sometimes intends different meanings in one sentence, however, this is not the primary one (see what I wrote about this in the introduction to the explanation of the book of Qohelet, which was printed here in the year 630 [1770]).<sup>33</sup> And the interpreter who translates into another language, if it is impossible for him to combine the two meanings together well in his translation, and to hide the second meaning in the shade of the first meaning, as it is in the language which is before us, he can only choose the first and simple meaning, and should not deviate from it to the left or two the right, and he should leave the *derash* to the expert in the translated book. But, however, if, in the way that appears to us, the *peshat* of the Scripture is hidden from us and opposed to the accepted way of the *derash*, which was copied for us by our sages, may their memory be blessed, so that it is impossible for both of them to be correct, for the contradiction prevents it, then it is obligatory for us to go the way of the *derash*, and to translate the Scripture according to it, for we only have the tradition of our sages, may their memory be blessed, and in their light may we see light.

And further, our master and teacher, R. Solomon Dubno, added to this an essay, *Tiqun Soferim*, for he has become a great scholar in matters of the Masorah, in deletions and

additions, in the grammar of the language and the foundations of the accents. He collected from the book, *Masoret Seyag Latorah* of our rabbi, Meir Halevi Abu Alefra [Abulafia] b. Todros [1170?-1244] of Toleda, may his memory be blessed (who was a friend of Maimonides, and died in the year 5004, from the creation of the world), and from the book, *Or Torah*, which R. Menahem [b. Judah] de Lonzano [1550-before 1624] composed, and from the book, *Minhat Shay*, of our master and teacher, R. Yedidiah Solomon [Rafael b. Abraham] from Norzi [16th/17th cent.], may his memory be blessed. For they examined and researched and understood each word, to make known whether it was defective or *plene*, each letter, if it was *hazaq* [with dagesh] or *rafe* [without dagesh], and every accentuation, whether it was ultimate or penultimate. And thus [they researched] the minscule and majuscule letters, the straight and separating letters, the *tagim* and the *gayot*, the open and closed paragraphs.<sup>54</sup> They also regulated the corruptions that occurred in the printed Masorah, according to manuscripts of Masorot that came into their hands, for one cannot rely on the printed Masorot because of the many mistakes that are in them. And who can calculate the great good these authors did for us in their books? Were it not for them, the Torah would almost have been forgotten from Israel, and the scribes would not know

how to write even one portion according to its ordinance, and the reader could not read even one verse according to its law. For there are many mistakes in the printed books, and there are many errors found in them. And our master and teacher, the aforementioned R. Solomon Dubno, did his work with faith, and the work of these authors was not sufficient for him, but, rather, he checked after them with every kind of research, and took pains and toiled so that no thing which was not correct would go out from under his hand. And he combined with these three authors a Tanakh with the commentary of Rashi, may his memory be blessed, from a parchment manuscript, written in the year 249 [1488/89], which was very well proofread (it was a gift to me from my friend, the officer, *parnas*, and leader, his honor, the rabbi, R. Zeligman from Koenigsberg, may God remember him for good). And on the scroll are some edited Masoretic notes which are not printed, and it was help to him in explaining, according to it, several doubts, which the reader will see in the book, *Tiqun Soferim*, which is before him. And thus were found in my hand the commentaries of Rashi and Rashbam [R. Samuel b. Meir, c. 1080-c. 1174], may their memory be blessed, a manuscript on parchment, written in the holy community of Worms, which came into my hand from the library of Jablonsky, the first printer who printed the commentary

of Rashbam from the version of this manuscript, here in our city in the year 475, from the creation of the world [1714/15], but the scribe who copied from it was not an expert in the old script, and he erred many times, and he sometimes omitted entire lines. And thus it is that our master and teacher, the aforementioned R. Solomon Dubno, was helped by that manuscript, in the places of error in the printed commentary of Rashbam.

And I added to the explanation of the aforementioned R. Solomon Dubno, and I explained every foreign word which is mentioned in the commentary of Rashi, may his memory be blessed, and I also received much help in this from the two manuscripts in my hands, for these languages in print are very corrupted and perverted, as the reader will see in our commentary. And I also found, in the words of Rashi in the two manuscripts, corrected and straight versions, I rejoiced greatly over them, and the heart of the reader will rejoice in them also, for the rabbi, may his memory be blessed, was saved by them from strange and surprising words that came into the printed book, or from the words of the erring student, who wrote his thoughts on the page. and the printers inserted them into the words of the rabbi. You will see an example of it in the commentary on Terumah, (Lev. 13:33) and again there (13:43).

And behold, all of these were done by our master and teacher, the aforementioned R. Solomon Dubno, in the book of Genesis (except the portion Bereshit, which I, the author explained, and our master and teacher R. Solomon Dubno added the grammar to those places) to its end, and in its midst come things which I placed in his mouth, and they are marked between two square brackets like this [...], and they begin with *alef"he*, which is an abbreviation for "THE TRANSLATOR SAID" [*amar hametarge*]. And he also left in my hand excerpts for the need of the explanation of some of the portions from the book of Numbers, but they needed correction, for he only wrote them in the first draft, and he did not scrutinize them again, as he did the portions of the book of Genesis.

And in the book of Exodus, I, the author, composed the entire explanation, from its beginning to the end, except for those places in parenthesis which came into them from the words of the aforementioned R. Solomon Dubno, but he alone composed the *Tiqun Soferim* to that book, also. And at the beginning of the book, he began to print his introduction, but he did not finish it,<sup>35</sup> for before its end, another spirit overcame him. I do not know what happened to him, but he left me and returned to his land.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps when he approached the work, to do it, he thought in

his heart to finish in in another year or two, and to take the complete wages for his work, (and thus my thought was similar at the beginning), but then he saw that the work was very long and hard, and required great toil and daily diligence. And the publishing became more and more expensive, and all the wealth which the helpers had spent from their pockets was not sufficient for the good paper and the expensive print, for it rose above the total of 3,500 *Reichstaler*, then his hands became weak and his strenght left, and he gave up on the reward completely. At any rate, I remained alone with my brother, our master and teacher, R. SAUL, may his light shine forth, and he carried the words of God on his shoulder.

And again, I found one who clings to me like a brother [cf. Prov. 18:34], the great sage, the collector for the maintenance of the poor, my friend, the duty officer, his honor the rabbi, R. JEREMIAH, may his Rock and Redeemer protect him, BENDIT, b. R. Isaac, may his memory be blessed, from the nobles of this community [i.e. Berlin], he was strength and support for me, supervising those who did the work, and overseeing bookkeepers, and even sending the book to their purchasers on time, for zealousness and great diligence were needed for this, and I did not attempt these. And all his needs and affairs did not prevent him from

overseeing my responsibility, but remember him, rather for this.

And, when I understood that the work became too great for our master and teacher, the aforementioned R. Solomon Dubno, and he was not able to bear it alone, I entreated my devoted friend, the dear one of my soul, an eloquently wise man, the rabbi, our master and teacher, R. [Naftali] Herz Wessely [1725-1805], may his light shine forth, who is famous for his precious and lovely compositions,<sup>37</sup> to write the explanation, according to our method, on the book Leviticus. The aforementioned rabbi, since I became precious in his eyes because of my great love for him, turned from his affairs and set his heart to explain all of this book, from its beginning to its end, and he included in his explanation, respectable studies in the laws and rules, and in the ways of the language, and the procession of characters, and in the paths of the attributes and qualities; he did not leave a portion in which he did not introduce new things in one of these matters, according to his way in the well known and famous essays from him. And his modesty is so great, that with all his generosity, he allowed me to disagree with him, and to insert my criticisms and arguments, enclosed between square brackets, in the midst of his explanations, and the reader will choose for

himself that which is right in his eyes.

In Numbers and Deuteronomy, which I have now finished,<sup>38</sup> with the grace of God, may He be praised, I was helped with their explanation by other men, my fellow Jews, scholars, who have a reputation in Torah and wisdom, but, out of great humility, did not allow me to reveal their names.<sup>39</sup> And the author of *Tiqun Soferim* of the three last books, is the great rabbi, the grammarian, our master and teacher, R. SHALOM, may his light shine forth, of Mezritsh.

Our master and teacher, the aforementioned R. Solomon Dubno, wrote in his introduction to the pamphlet, '*Alim Litrufah*, that he would briefly list all the rules of grammar, which are the part which relates to letters [consonants] and the vowels, the *dagesh* and the *rafé*, the mobile *shva* and the quiescent *shva*, ultimate and penultimate [stress], *meteg* and *gaya*; and also the part which relates to the declension of the nouns, and [the conjugation] of the verbs, and the words and their endings; and also the part that relates to the accents, and the differentiation of their degrees of the lengths of the pause and its shortness, and its conjunction, and he placed this essay in the introduction to the Pentateuch, and thus you will find in the first two books, in several places, when we mention the foundations of the language and its melody, it is said that

the matter is explained in the introduction to the book. But this is not the case, for in truth, this was the advise of our master and teacher, the aforementioned R. Solomon Dubnno. However, my heart was not in accord with this, for we have no lack of books on the grammar of the language, that I should come to add still another one to their number. Books without number have already been composed about all these matters, sometimes at length, and sometimes in brief. And if, perhaps, there could be gathered in our hands today a book sufficient in all the laws of the melody, both in the Twenty-one Books and in Job, Proverbs, and Psalms,<sup>40</sup> for there is only a little in the Holy Tongue of that which the grammarian, our master and teacher, R. [Solomon] ZALMAN HANAU [1687-1746], may his memory be blessed, wrote on the Twenty-one Books, and the small and precious essay which our master and teacher, the aforementioned R. Solomon Dubno published in the name of the great rabbi, the author of *Mirkevet Hamishnah* [reputed to be Anshel of Cracow, first half of the 16th century], on the melody in the books of Job, Proverbs and Psalms. Despite this, there is no room for these matters at the beginning of this composition. And since, praise God, the children learn all this part of the grammar of the language in school, there is no doubt that other books will be composed about these matters, for the

need of the young children who are in school, and nothing will be lacking from them.

However, I have seen a great need to mention the rules at the beginning of this composition, upon which we have relied in the translation of the Scriptures and their explanation, and which are not found in any of the language books which are known to me, so that the reader will understand the words of the book, in every place where they are based on these rules. And in order to preserve them in a fitting order, I have included them in the section *Helqe Hadibur Veshimusheyhe* [The Parts of Speech and Their Usage], and you, the reader, shall surely place these things upon your heart, since it is pleasant for you to keep them.

1 (1) IN THE BEGINNING [*bereshit*]: like, at first [*batehilah*], and Onkelos translated, "in the beginning [*baqadmin*]," but it is not a construct, like "As an offering of first fruits [*qorban reshit*]...," (Lev. 2:12) 'And he chose a first part for himself [*Wayar' reshit lo*]...' (Deut. 33:21). And Targum Yerushalmi [says] "with wisdom [*hokhmah*] he created," this too is from the meaning of "at first [*tehilah*]," since wisdom is the beginning of the way of God [cf. Prov. 8:22], before his actions, and the meaning is that wisdom prepares toward the desired end in direct ways, and this end is last in practice, but first in thought, and, therefore, it is conceivable to say that this "beginning" is wisdom, and with it [i.e. wisdom], the Holy One, praised be He, created all that he created.

CREATED: its primary meaning concerns bringing forth from nothingness to existence [*creatio ex nihilo*], he made that which did not exist into that which does exist, and it also refers to the addition to that which exists, and the expansion of the substance and its power.

ET [direct object indicator]: in every instance it is the sign for the object. Therefore, sometimes it is the sign of the accusative, and sometimes the sign of the nominative,

for in every form of the main categories, which are called, in German, *Handelnde Zeitwörter*, the subject of the sentence is the actor [*po'el*] and it is indicated by the nominative form. The recipient of the action is joined to it by the accusative form, as in this verse; God is the subject, and it is found in the language of the peoples in the nominative form, and the "heavens and the earth" are the recipients of the action and they are found in the accusative form. And with every form of the subordinate categories, which are called in German *Leidende Zeitwörter*, is a recipient of the action, it itself is the subject of the sentence. For example, "the heavens were created," in German "*der Himmel ist beschaffen worden*". And behold, the languages of the people have chosen to designate the subject as the nominative form, according to the rule of the subject of the sentence, even if it is also the recipient [of the action], and the Hebrew linguist marks it with the sign *et*, in the sense that it is the recipient of the action, as in "...and its flesh shall not be eaten..." (Ex. 21:28), "So Moses [and Aaron] were brought back..." (*ibid.* 10:8), "...let this land be given..." (Num. 32:5), and there are many like this, and remember this rule! And it says "created" in the singular, even though the word "God [*Elohim*]" is a plural form. The meaning of this is that the

essence of the word is *El*, which is an expression of power, and it uses the word *Elohim* [a plural] regarding the Only One, may he be praised, since He is the master of all powers.

HEAVENS: includes everything that is in them, and so too the earth. And it first says in general, that in the beginning of all the things, the Holy One, praised be He, brought forth the heavens and all their hosts, and the earth and its fullness, from definite nothingness to existence, but He does not specify a thing with this, as our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said, "He declared the power of His acts to His people" [Ps. 111:6]. It is impossible to declare the power of the act of creation to flesh and blood, therefore the Scripture says generally, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

(2) AND THE EARTH (*veha'arets*): The use of this *vav* is not for conjunction, for the uses of the *vav* are many, as I informed you in the introduction.<sup>41</sup> And here it is for the continuation of the sentence, it opens with that which it ended [in the previous verse], as if to say, "and, however, the earth, which I mentioned," therefore it is accented with the accent *revi'a*. And in truth, Moses did not speak about the world to come, which is the world of the angels specifically, which is included in the heavens, whose

creation he mentioned in the first verse. However, he did speak specifically about the world of existence and destruction which was given to human beings, and he began with the earth [cf. Ibn Ezra, Gen. 1:2].

FORMLESS [*tohu*]: a word which puzzles human beings, in Rashi, "*estordison* in the vernacular [Old French]," which is *étourdissement* [amazement], and in German, *betäubend*, which means astonishment and desolation, and its meaning is that in the beginning of its creation, the earth was without a suitable order for the end which He, may he be praised, intended.

AND VOID [*wavohu*]: from the words "it is in it [*bo hu*]," for it contained the foundations of all the material creations. And the roots of *tohu wavohu* are *taw-he-he* and *bet-he-he* [respectively], and the *waw*'s instead of the *he* is like "...and bowed himself to the earth [*wayishtahu artsah*]" (Gen. 18:2), "...and they fed in the reeds grass" [*watir'edah ba'ahu*]" (ibid. 41:2).<sup>42</sup>

AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD ETC.: I will copy for you here the interpretation of the friend of the Kuzar king, with a slight change of language, which is in the fourth section (para. 25) [in the *Kuzari*]. "The waters" are a reference to the primary matter which is part of all created primary matters, and it contains the forms of all the matters in

potentiality, and the will of God, may He be praised, surrounded it, and He invented all the forms in reality with it, as His wisdom decreed. And He called this will "the spirit of God," as it is said, "...because He has a different spirit..." (Num. 14:24), and the meaning is that the primary matter was created without quality of form fitting the end, but it contained all the forms in potentiality, and this is "formless and void," and the divine will hovered over it, and He placed the forms in it in reality. And the comparison of this natural matter with the water is very correct, for everything which is denser than the water does not admit the influence of nature equally on all its parts, since they are strong [denser] and preserve their measure; and this is the difference of artificial work from the action of nature, for the artificial action only gives the form on the surface of the matter, but not in the internal parts, likewise are all the actions of the mechanical craftsman on the hard earthy matter. Nature is not like this, for it acts on all parts of the thing and it forms its middle and interior. And there is no natural substance which was not previously in a liquid form. If this was not the case, it could not be called natural, but only an artificial compound or accidental formation (and thus our rabbis, may their memory be blessed,

said, the quality of man is unable to make a form out of water, but the Holy One, praised be He, can make a form out of water). And while it was still in liquid state, nature could act upon it and form its interior, and after that, that which needed to become solid, became solid. See there.

And behold, Nachmanides and Ibn Ezra interpreted "the spirit of God" as the element air [of the four elements], and "spirit" is in construct with God, according to the opinion of Ibn Ezra, because it was a messenger of the will of God to dry up the waters, and according to the opinion of Nachmanides, since it was finer than the all the others. And there are those who interpret that it is in construct with God since it was strong, for it is the custom of the language, when it wishes to stress a words, it puts it in construct with God, as in "...an exceedingly great city..." [*'ir gedolah lelohi*] (Jonah 3:3), "...like the mighty mountains..." [*keharerey el*] (Ps. 36:7), "...mighty cedars..." [*'arzei el*] (*ibid.* 80:11), "...and it became a very great panic..." [*haredet elohi*] (1Sam. 14:15). And therefore its translation in German would be "*ein starker Wind wehend.*" But Rashi, may his memory be blessed, interpreted, and these are his words, "And the throne of glory is suspended in the air and hovers over the face of the waters, by the breath of the mouth of the Holy One,

praised be He, at his command, like the dove which hovers over her nest, *acoveter*, in the vernacular". And in German, it is *brüten*, and perhaps it is also the intention of Rashi to name divine will in the forming of the created things in the name of the Throne of Glory. And according to the reasoning, the verse is not found here to list the four elements, and the way they are organized is above this according to the nature of their bulk or thinness, for this is not one of the matters of the Torah or of faith. The word "hovers" also teaches, according to this interpretation, that its meaning is slight, quiet, small movement, which is called "*weben*" in German. But about the element air, which blows strongly, the Scriptures usually says "blow strongly [*nashav*]" or "blow [*nashaf*]," as in "You did blow with your wind..." [*nashaf*] (Ex. 15:10), "...when the breath of the Lord blows upon it..." [*nashav*] (Isa. 40:7), "...he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow..." [*nashav*] (Ps. 147:18). And thus is it in *Genesis Rabbah*, chapter 2, "blows [*enashvet*]" is not written there, but rather "hovers [*erahfet*]," like the bird which hovers with its wings, and its wings barely sometimes touch it and sometimes do not. And in the Jerusalem Talmud, which they do not interpret explicitly, "it says here hovering [*rahuf*] and further on, "...hovers over it young..." (Deut. 32:11), just as further

on, it barely touches, so also here etc...". Thus the German translator chose to translate according to the explanation of the wise Kuzari.<sup>43</sup>

FACE: the surface which is visible on every object is called "face," taken from the face of the man, which appears in the first view.

DEEP: According to the opinion of [R. David] Qimhi, [1160?-1235?] (in [Sefer ha-] *Shorashi*, under the root, *taw-he-~~me~~*) this is the name of the multitude of waters in general. And Nachmanides wrote that the waters from which the dust was separated are called "deep," and the floor of the sea is called "deep," "...and He led them through the deep as through the desert..." (Ps. 106:9), "who led them through the depths? Like a horse through the desert..." (Isa. 63:13), and it is conceivable that this is a reference to the bottom of the waters which descend to a depth without limit or definite end. Therefore it is metaphorically said that it has no end, it is said, "...your judgements are like the great deep..." (Ps. 36:7).

THE WATERS: a plural word, also not separated [into the singular] And it is like the pattern of "years [*shani*]," for it is masculine and feminine, but it is also found with the singular, "...[water]...was not thrown [*zaraq*] upon him..." (Num. 19:13 etc.).

(3) AND [GOD] SAID: a word of speaking [is used] here to show the will, as in "...what does your soul desire [literaly: say], that I will do it for you?" (1Sam. 20:4),<sup>44</sup> that which you want and desire. And thus "...and let her be a wife to your master's son, as the Lord has spoken" (Gen. 24:51), as he wanted, for thus was his will, or it is a kind of thought, like "...and you said in your heart..." (Isa. 47:10 and Zeph. 2:15), "Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves..." (Zech. 12:5), the meaning is to say that it was not with travail or toil like the act of finite worker. The *waw* of "And [God] said [*wayomer*]" changes the future to the past, and thus the *waw* of "and there was light [*wayehi or*]." And they are also used for the continuation of the sentence and the conjunction of that which precedes with that which follows, as it is translated in German, "*da sprach...so ward.*"<sup>45</sup>

LET THERE BE: a word of becoming teaches about an act of the present time, as in "...and you wish to become their king..." (Neh. 6:6), and the meaning of "let there" is that the light was present. And the light is a completely pure substance, quick of movement, surrounding the earth higher than the wind. If any movement or trembling is caused in it by the sun or the stars or an earthly fire, it shoots its arrows and rays on every surrounding dense object, in

straight lines, and in this way it shines on and illuminates all the corporeal objects from the light opposite it with straight lines, in the place where its rays reach without a screen blocking. And thus it is called light in action, and in this lack of movement it remains potential light. And for this the creation of the light was intended, seeing that the lights [sun etc.] were not in the sky until the fourth day. And the grammar of the word "let there be [*yehi*] is strange, since the second and third radicals are from the vowel letters [*alef, he, waw, yod*], since its root is *he-yod-he*. And the future is *EHEYEH* [and] *YIHEYEH*, and when it occurs with a missing *he* according to the custom of the pattern of the quiescent third radical *he*, it would be fitting to be *\*IHÉ* [and] *YIHÉ* like from *banah, qanah; MAYIVEN MAYIQEN*, and since it is not the nature of the *yod* to be quiescent after the the *segol* at the end of a word, when we find it quiescent in the middle of the word in the second and third person feminine plural of the quiescent third radical *he* pattern when the accent is before the *yod*, as in "Your eyes will see [*tehezenah*] the king in his beauty; they will behold [*tir'edah*] a land which stretches afar" (Isa. 33:17), therefore the vowels are switched, and they placed the *segol* of the *he* under the *yod*, and the *hiriq* of the *yod* under the *he*. And they said in the pausal, "for he spoke and it came

to be [wayéhi]" (Ps. 33[:9]), "Who has commanded, and it came to pass [watéhi]" (Lam. 3:37) with a *zafef*, which sometimes follows the rule of the pausal, and they did not stress this word in the middle of the sentence, and said "let there be [yehi] light," "...I will be [ehi] your destruction, Sheol..." (Hos. 13:14), and this is the majority of their use of that root. And the *shwa* is of the first radical of the word as it is found in completeness, EHEYEH, YIHEYEH. (And the opinion of the author of *Petaḥ Devaray* [anonymous, 1502/3], 83a, is that its essence is WAYEHY, in the meter of "...took...captive...[wayishb]" (Num. 21:1). Only because the letter *yod* is not found pointed with a *shwa* at the end of a word, therefore, they left the *yod*, and they placed the *hiriq* of the first *yod* under the *he*, and the *shwa* of the *he* under the *yod*.) And this root has a companion, and it is the root *het-yod-he* [live], from which it is said YEHI, TEHI, for the aforementioned reason, and both were suitable to be with a *pataḥ* under [the letters] *alef*, *yod*, *taf*, *nun* [pronominal preformatives] and also the first radical, even in the *qal* declension, for the broadening of the first radical, which is a guttural, like "And she conceived [watahar] and bore Cain..." (Gen. 4:1), "...and he divided [wayaḥats] the people..." (*ibid.* 32:8), "...and let our eyes gaze [wetaḥaz]

upon Zion." (Mic. 4:11), and thus it would be fitting to say here, 'AHAY, YAHAY, 'AHAY, YAḤAY, except that it is not the way of the radical *yod* to be vowelized at the end of word. And Ibn Ezra wrote (at the beginning of the portion, Exodus [1:5]), "The word *yehi* was fit to be like "...and the multiplying [*yirev*] of the burden against him..." (2Chr. 24:27), and since the *he* is from the gutturals, the pointed the first *yod* of the word *yehiy* with a *qamats qatan*," thus far his words. And without doubt, this is a printing error, for a *qamats qatan* is a *tsere*, but we do not find it with a *tsere*, but rather with a *segol* in pausal, and he means to say "with a *patah qatan*" which is a *segol*. And thus it is edited in a Pentateuch with Rashbam which was printed in Amsterdam. And he wrote further that "there is not a verb in the *qal* declension in which the "serving" letter [i.e. the preformative] uses a *shwa*, except this form, and the form *wayehi...*". And R. Elijah Bahur wondered about this in *Sefer Haharkavah* [1518], "how could he not remember *YESHUVUN* [and] *YEKUNUN* which are futures of the *qal*, medial weak, and *alef*, *yod*, *tan*, *nun* (the pronominal preformatives) are found with a *shwa*, because of the *nun* which is at the end. Perhaps his intention is that there is no additional letter at the end". Thus far his words. And he also forgot "gathered around [*TESUBENAH*]" (Gen. 37:7), which is from the *qal*, and

neither the *nun* or the *he* are added, and are only there for the purpose of the third person feminine plural, rather, he meant that there was only one weak letter at the end as a suffix.

(4) AND [GOD] SAW: the will of God to bring an object from potentiality to existence is called "saying [*amirah*]," and his will for its continuance is called "seeing [*re'iyah*]," like the meaning of "...then I saw..." of Qohelet (2:13), "Admon's words have my approval..." [b. Ketub. 109a],<sup>46</sup> "The king also said to Zadok the priest, 'Look, go back to the city in peace..'" (2Sam. 15:27). The meaning is to show their existence is in his will alone, and if his will is separated from them for a moment, they would return to nothingness, and therefore it says about every act of each day, "and God saw that it was good". The desire is that the object would take the form mentioned there, in the quality suitable for the end intended by Him, may He be praised, which agrees with the primordial wisdom which is the first way of God, and thus He desired the continuation and permanence of that object in that quality. And on the sixth day, when all was completed, it says, "...and God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good," [Gen. 1:31] as will be explained there, God willing. And thus when the existence of the light was present, He desired

its eternal continuence, and he separated it from the darkness. And it specifically says "the light," for if it simply said, "and God saw that it was good," it would have also applied to the heavens and the earth, but He had not yet decreed continuence for them, for they did not remain that way, rather, they were changed during the coming days of creation, on the second and the third, then He decreed continuence for them and said, "And God saw that it was good". [Gen. 1:12] *NAYAR'* [And God saw], this word is grammatically strange, and the reason is that the second and third radicals are part of the weak letters, since its root is *resh-alef-he*, and it would be proper to be, in its completeness, *\*NAYIR'EH*, except that the accent was moved to the *yod*, the first radical, and the *he* that was after the *segol* was not left, since the accent was not under it. And it would have been proper for the *he* and the *shwa* under the *resh* to fall, and for a *segol* to come under the *resh*, and to say *NAYIRE'*, according to the pattern of *MAYIFEN*, *MAYIVEN*, from *PANAH*, *BANAH*,<sup>47</sup> or *NAYERE'* "...he came swiftly [*MAYEDE*] upon the wings of the wind..." (Ps. 18:11), from the root *dalet-alef-he*, and as we find it with the rest of the pronominal preformatives, "...when the woman saw [*MATERE'*]" (Gen. 3:6), "...and I saw [*MA'ERE'*] in a dream" (*ibid.* 31:10), and likewise the conversive *naw*; "...and now, let

Pharoah look out [YIRE']" (*ibid.* 41:33). But since they used this this root with the *yod* of the pronominal preformatives more than with the rest, they changed its vowel to make it easier to join with the consecutive *waw*, and they said *MAYAR'*, but without the consecutive *waw*, *\*YAR'* would not be said, thus with the rest of the pronominal preformatives they would not do it, and say *\*NA'AR'*, *\*MANAR'*, *\*NATAR'*. And the opinion of R. Judah Hayyuj [c. 945-c. 1000] is that *MAYAR'* comes in the pattern of "...and he took [MAYISHB] some of them..." (Num. 21:1), "...and my heart has been secretly enticed [MAYIFT]..." (Job. 31:27), and it would be proper to be *\*MAYIR'*, but they did not point it thus, so that it would not be confused in the reading with *\*MAYIR*, from "...then the archers shot [MAYORU]..." (2Sam. 11:24), from the form "...He cast [YARAH] into the sea..." (Ex. 15:4). And this is the opinion of Ibn Ezra in his *Sefer Hatsahot* [Venice, 1546] in the section on the *PA'AL* [qal] declension, (and thus he wrote in his commentary of on the portion *MAYETSE'*, Gen. 29:2, see there). And the author of *Petaḥ Devaray* (83a) wrote that they did not point it *MAYIR'* with a *shwa* under the *alef* since it is not the way of the *alef* to be pointed with a *shwa* when it comes at the end of the word, for its rule is like the rule of the *yod*. But it appears to me that they pointed it with a *pataḥ* to broaden

the *resh*, which has a rule of slight broadening, as in "...and He took off [NAYASAR]..." (Ex. 14:25). And behold, the *qal* and the *hiph'il* are comparable in the word, you will only recognize it from the context, but we only find it once in the *hiph'il*, "...and he showed [NAYAR'] them the king's son..." (2Kgs. 11:4), and the *patah* of the *yod* is there according to its rule, for in its completeness, it would be proper to be \*NAYAR'EH.

(5) AND HE CALLED: the calling here is the limited separation of them when they took their form. He decreed that the rays of light should go out in straight lines and be reflected when they meet a dense object. And by this the region of the light and the dark are limited, and thus they said, "day will be your region, and night will be your region".

NIGHT: the *he* is additional and is not for the feminine, for [accent on the] the word is penultimate.

EVENING: the beginning of the night is called evening, since, during it, forms and appearances are mixed. And the beginning of the day is called "morning", for man searches between them. It says that there was morning and evening of one day, and it is conceivable that it is like what some of the commentators wrote, who cite Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, that it alludes to that which would be on the

fourth day, after the lights has been placed in the firmament of the heavens, that immediately when the light began to go forth, there was morning at that very moment for the dwellers in the east, and there was night for the dwellers of the west, and thus is the matter in perpetuity, in the movements of the sphere over the face of all the earth in twenty-four hours, for at every minute of them, it is morning in this place, and evening in a place opposite to it, as is the way of "who rolls away light from before darkness and darkness from before light" [Daily Liturgy, *Ma'ariv*], and behold, from the point of view of the entire planet, it is always [both] evening and morning; at the same time, it is evening for this one, and morning for that one. And the Scriptures states the attributes of the day before those of the evening, and says "evening," and afterward "morning" as an allusion to the nothingness which preceded the existence at the beginning of creation. And it says "one day" and not the "first day", for there is no "first" without a "second," and the second had not yet been made, for the first precedes the second in number or in degree, but both are found, and it is from the sentence which is called by logician a compound sentence, the "one" does not lead to the second, and thus it is translated in German [*ein Tag*].

((6) FIRMAMENT [*raqia'*]: like it is said, "...and gold leaf was hammered [*wayeraq'u*]..." (Ex. 39:3). Of this substance that he created in the beginning from nothingness, it says that the firmament would be stretched like a tent in the midst of the waters, and it would separate the waters from the waters.

IN THE MIDST OF THE WATERS: "in the middle of the waters, so that there would be a separation between the upper waters and the firmament, as there is between the firmament and the waters on the earth, from this you learn that they are suspended at the command of the King". (*Genesis Rabbah* and the words of Rashi) (And this is the version in the Rashi manuscript).<sup>40</sup> And Nachmanides concludes about this, and these are his words, "...this is part of the act of creation, and do not hope that I will write anything about it, for this matter is from the secrets of the Torah. And the verses do not require explanation about this, since the Scriptures do not expound on its meaning, and it is forbidden to those who know [it], and how much the more so to us." Thus far his words. And how much the more so to those of us of even lower understanding such as we with our limited perception. And according to the simple meaning of the verse, the firmament is the pure and clear air which separated the waters of the cloud from the waters on the

earth, since, at the beginning, the earth was completely covered with water, the air was all wet and damp, full of clouds or fog or thick mist which rise from the water, and according to the desire of God, may He be praised, the waters were devided from the waters, some of them went up above and became clouds, some of them were gathered together and became the pool of waters which are called "seas," and between the waters and the waters, the pure, clear air was formed for the need of the breathing of everything which has the breath of life in its nostrils, and the growth of flowers and the trees which cannot exist in damp and wet air, full of thick mist.

(7) AND [GOD] MADE: this word of making in every occurence is the regulation of an object according to its character. AND IT WAS SO: and it was so all the days of the universe.

(8) AND GOD CALLED THE FIRMAMENT HEAVEN: The correct meaning, according to the simple interpretation of the Scriptures is as Nachmanides wrote, and these are his words, with a slight additional explanation according to our method. The "heavens" which are mentioned in the first verse are the upper heavens and are not part of the spheres, but they are above the chariot, like the meaning of "Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of a firmament, shining like crystal, spread out above their

heads," (Ezek. 1:22) and because of them, the Holy One, praised be He, is called "rider of the heavens". And Scripture does not relate a thing about their creation, as we have written; it does not mention the angels, the beasts of the chariot, or every separate thing which is not a material being, and it does not specify anything about their formation. Rather, it mentions, in general, that the heavens were created, that it to say, their former state was nothingness, and, by the will of God, they came forth to existence. (Therefore our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said that "In the beginning" was also a command, as if to say that the first verse, even though "and God said" is not specifically stated there, it is like a command of God and his instruction, for it mentions the will of God and his action in the creation of the separate spiritual beings, in bringing them forth to being after absolute nothingness.) And, on the second day, He said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters," that it to say, that it became a thing stretched out dividing between the waters, and He also called these spheres "heavens" after the first upper heavens, therefore he called them, in the present section, "the firmament of the heavens," "And God set them in the firmament of the heavens..." [Gen. 1:17] to explain that they are not those which were mentioned by the name

"heavens," but rather, the firmaments which he called "heavens," and Nachmanides brought proof for these things from the words of our sages, may their memory be blessed, see there, for I do not wish to belabor the point.

SECOND [SHENI(Y)]: it would be proper to be \*SHENIYI(Y), one *yod* for the root, in place of the *he*, since its root is *shin-nun-he*, and, likewise, the plural is SHENIYIN, and the third radical drops out since it is weak.

(9) LET [THE WATERS] BE GATHERED [YIQAMU]: let them be joined together [*yithabru*], and it is like, "...shall gather to it [*niqemu eleha*]..." (Jer. 3:17).

INTO ONE PLACE: water and dust were mixed over the face of all the earth, and He decreed that the water should be joined together in a place, brought together from every corner, and he decreed that the dust should rise up until it appeared above the water, and there it dried, and became the dry, flattened land, fit for man to dwell upon, and thus it is written, "...who spread out the earth upon the waters..." (Ps. 136:6).

(10) THE DRY LAND EARTH [ERETS]: the name that is fitting for it is dry land [*yabashah*], for when the waters were separated from the dust, it was dry, but he called it earth [*erets*] after all the elements which were created first, and the reason is that all the elements were created for the

sake of the dry land, so that it would be a dwelling place for men, for no-one among the earthly creatures would acknowledge his Creator except him.

HE CALLED SEAS: it says "seas" in the plural, since there was no [one] sea there which covered the entire earth. And behold, "the waters that were gathered together" include the land with the waters that were gathered on it. And sometimes, the land alone is called the name "sea," as it is written, "...and fill the waters in the seas..." [Gen. 1:22] and "...as the waters cover the sea..." (Isa. 11:9).

AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD: this is its continuence in the will of God. And the meaning is that when He gave them this form, He took pleasure in them, for thus they were suited to the intended end, from Him, may He be blessed, and He decreed continuence and perpetuity for them in this quality. And this is what our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said "why does it not say 'for it was good' on the second [day of creation]? Since the labor of the water was not finished on the second, and they were not yet, therefore, in the suitable quality for the purpose of the creation. Therefore, He did not decree continuence for them until the third day, on which the labor of the water was finished as was required for all life and for the plants of the earth. And he began and finished other additional work, and it says

"that it was good" twice, once for the labor of the waters, and once for the day.

(11) VEGETATION: the covering of the earth with plants is called "vegetation," in Rashi, *herbaries* in the vernacular, which is *herbeuse*, in German, *Pflanzen Gewächse*. Some of which would grow and become "plants yielding seed," and some of which would become "fruit trees bearing fruit...each according to its kind." And therefore it does not say, "Let the earth put forth grass and bring forth fruit trees, for, in truth, "Let the earth put forth grass" includes plants and trees, as we have said, and thus it is translated into German. And it is correct, accordingly, for the word "vegetation" to have the accent *zaqef qatan* which makes more of a break than the *zaqef qatan* which is on the word seed, for it is in relation to [the words] "plants" and "trees" which are after it. And even in verse 12, the word "vegetation" is [marked] with a *telisha gedolah*, a lesser pause than the *pashta* which is on the word "seed". There is no contradiction of our words from this, because it says there, "The earth brought forth [*watotse'*]...", and, therefore, it is not necessary to join [the word] "vegetation" to [the word] "tree," since the verb of "bringing forth" applies equally to "trees" and "plants," and it would be conceivable to say, "the earth will bring

forth trees bearing fruit". In this verse, however, it says "put forth [*tadshel*]," and the verb of "putting forth" does not apply to trees, and it is impossible to say "the earth will put forth trees bearing fruit," since, in being a tree, it departs from the definition of "putting forth" [which applies only to vegetation, not to trees]. And by necessity it must say "let the earth put forth vegetation, trees bearing fruit," and therefore, the word "vegetation" must be related to the word "trees" which is after it, and thus the word "vegetation" is found with a *zaqef qatan* in some of the precise books. Despite this, in my *Tiqun Soferim*, I have accented it with a *revi'a*, as the *Or Torah* [Menahem b. Judah di Lonzano, 1550-1624] testifies that thus it is in books of Spain and in the *'Et Sofer* of Qimhi.

YIELDING SEED: the seed will grow in it, to be sown from it in a different place.

IN WHICH IS THEIR SEED: these are the seeds of every fruit, from which the tree sprouts when they sow it, since all the trees grow from their seed, even if it is the custom, with some of them, to plant a branch from them. And Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, expressed surprise at why the Scriptures did not mention fruitless trees, and why it gave the order about trees bearing fruit alone. However, the truth is that the trees of the field also give their fruit

in which are the seeds for sowing. And that which if fit to be eaten is called "tree for eating" [ets *ma'akhal*], but "tree bearing fruit" is a collective name for fruitless trees and "trees for eating". And it is also possible that all the fruitless trees are included in the thorns and thistles that only flourished after the earth was cursed. And the original intention was that the earth would only bring forth trees bearing fruit that were fit for the food of man.

ACCORDING TO ITS KIND: that which is similar to it, and which has its quality. And it is conceivable that the word "according to its kind [*lemino*] refers to plants and fruit bearing trees, but according to this, it would have been proper for *lemino* to have an more pausal accent than "seed [*zera'*]," and it appears to me that for this reason our sages, may their memory be blessed, said, in Hullin (60a), that it is not said, "according to its kind [*leminahu*]" about the grasses [*dasha'im*] in their commands, rather they applied an *a fortiori* argument to themselves. See there.

(12) AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOODS: thus the continuence of these kinds in their qualities was suitable for the end, and every kind separately, as He said "according to their own kind". And this is the prohibition of sowing two kinds of seed [Lev. 19:19], for the one who sows them denies the

power of the act of creation.

(14) LET THERE BE: it does not say "let there be [*yiheyu*, plural]," for, in the Holy Tongue, when the verb precedes the actor [verbal sentence], the subject of the sentence, neither the gender nor the number are preserved. It says, "if there is [*yiheyeh*, masculine] a virgin..." (Deut. 22:23), "And there were [*wayehiy*, masculine singular] certain men who were unclean..." (Num. 9:6), its pattern in the language of the people is *Verbum impersonale*. In German, *es werden* is said, which does not preserve the number, as would saying *sie werden* or *es werde*. And remember this rule! LIGHTS: Now on the fourth [day] he decreed that there should be shining bodies in the firmament which arouse the brightness of the light to go into action by the movement of trembling which they introduce into it, and by which the rays of light come forth to illuminate the earth.<sup>49</sup>

AND LET THEM BE FOR SIGNS: the change is that they should produce and make signs and portents out of it in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke, as in the words, "...nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens..." (Jer, 10:2). And it is conceivable that they would be signs for [land] travelers and seafarers, by which they would distinguish their course across the length and breadth of the countries on dry land and on the sea.

AND FOR SEASONS: "seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter..." (Gen. 8:22).

AND FOR DAYS: the attribute of the day and the attribute of the night.

AND YEARS: that they would complete their course, and that they would continue again to return in that path which they had followed. And the in solar year [this would be accomplished] in 365 days, and in the lunar year, in thirty days. [i.e. the period of the moon's revolution around the earth]

(15) AND LET THEM BE LIGHTS IN THE FIRMAMENT OF THE HEAVENS TO GIVE LIGHT UPON THE EARTH: it adds that their light and brightness would reach the earth, since it is possible that light would appear to them in the heavens, and would perform all the aforementioned acts without illuminating the earth, therefore it says, that they should become lights in the firmament of the heavens that would look toward the earth and would shed light upon it.

(16) AND GOD MADE ETC...AND GOD SET THEM: to teach that these lights did not come out of the substance of the firmament, but these bodies were set in it. And it mentions their ruling, for this matter of the ruling is another issue apart from the light which it mentions, since they have rule over the earth in existence and absence, and the rule over

the seas and the rivers, as is well known.

THE TWO GREAT LIGHTS: they are called the two great ones as opposed to the stars. And, if one should ask the question, "Did not the sages of the [mystical] *sefirot* say that Jupiter and all the planets, except Mercury and Venus, are larger than the moon?," the answer is that the meaning of "great" does not refer to their bodily size, but rather, to their light, and the light of the moon is many times [brighter] since it is close to the earth<sup>20</sup> (and light [*aa'or*] is masculine, even though its collective form is *ae'orot* [feminine]). And we will respond with this same answer to the one who asks how the moon can be called a light, since it has no light of its own, but receives light from the sun, and is itself a dark body, as is well known, for it can be said to him [the one asking], that the meaning is about a thing which gives light and shines on the objects when the sun is hidden. And behold, the moon gives light at night in a place where the brightness of the sun does not reach.

(20) BRING FORTH [*yishretsui*; German: *es ragen*]: a transitive verb, it is like, "... the Nile shall swarm [*wesharats*] with frogs..." (Ex. 7:28) The production in large number with continual movement is called "swarming [*sheritsah*]," and they called those things that swarm this because they

multiply very quickly and move about in continual motion. Or perhaps the first meaning is about the insect [*sherets*], since it runs [*she-rats*], and the verb about the production in large number was derived from it, for this is the way of insects. And this is the opinion of Onkelos, for he translates "let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures" as "let the waters bring forth insects [*rahish*]." And he interpreted "...and bring forth abundantly [*weshartsu*] on the earth..." (Gen. 9:7) as a matter of reproduction, "...and multiply [*ityaldu*] upon the earth..." for the making of the word is borrowed from the insects, and the meaning is that you should be fruitful and multiply like the insects on the earth, and thus, "...they were fruitful and increased greatly [*weyishrets*]" (Ex. 1:7), that, in their reproduction, they multiplied like the insects.

**SWARMS [*sherets*]:** a name which includes many species. There is *sherets* among the insects, like ants and worms, and there is *sherets* among the animals, like the rat, the mouse, the lizard, and the like, and all the fish. And there is *sherets* among the birds, and this is every bird that has four toes, for it leans on its toes and moves like insects [i.e. on its feet]. And that which is not like this is called a winged bird, since the the main part of its movement is flying.

**BIRDS:** our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, differed

over this. There were those who said that the birds were created from the water, and therefore it mentions their creation on the fifth day, since the command for the creation in the water was on this day. And R. Eliezer the Great said in his chapters [*Pirqa Derabi Eliezer*] that on the fifth day every winged bird came forth from the water. And, if this is the case, the interpretation of "let birds fly above the earth" is continued as if it said, "let the earth bring forth swarms of living creatures and birds that fly..." and the word "swarms" would apply to winged birds also. And the verse which says, "So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air..." ([Gen.] 2:9), [should be understood] as if it said, "And the Lord God formed every living creature out of the ground and every bird of the sky..." and there are many like this. However, in the Gemara [Hul. 27b] they differed over it, and there are those who say that the birds were created from both. They said that they were created from the mire, since the mire is in the floor of the sea, and from there is their offspring. As a result, *hayah* [creatures] is [marked] with an *etnah*, and the intent is as if there were two separate sentences there; "Let the waters give forth swarms of living creatures," and, "Let the birds fly across the earth." And if the words, "let the waters bring forth"

referred also to "let the bird fly," it would have been necessary to set the word "the waters" with a greater pausal accent than the word *hayah*.

ACROSS THE [FACE OF THE, *PENEY*] FIRMAMENT OF THE HEAVENS:  
 the surface of the concavity of the heavens appears to man, and therefore it is called "the face of the heavens [*peney hashamayim*]. And it says "on the face of the heavens [*'al peney hashamayim*]" even though the birds fly *under* the face of the heavens, for this is the rule of the language, since it is said about any body which hides another body from the eye of the beholder during its movement that it passes on it [*'alaw*] or on its face [*'al panaw*]. And this is like "So the present passed on before him [*'alaw*]..." (Gen. 32:22).

(21) SO [GOD] CREATED ETC.: "regarding the size of these creatures, some of which have a length of many parasangs, the Greeks related in their books that they knew some of them were 500 parasangs long, and our rabbis, may their memories be blessed, also exaggerated them.<sup>21</sup> Because of this, Scripture explicitly attributes their creation to God, for He is the one who fashioned them from nothingness in the beginning." Thus wrote Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed. And behold, the truth is that the verb "and [God] created [*wayivra'*]" refers also to the living creatures and the winged birds which are all creations of God, and He

fashioned them from nothingness, and brought them into existence. And even when the text says "Let the waters bring forth," behold, the waters are the active or material cause, but, in any case, it is conceivable to say that God created the fish from nothingness, since He is the source of the causes and their action, and without his desire for their continuence, they would not exist even for a moment, and would return to nothingness.

THE GREAT SEA MONSTERS: large fish that are in the seas, and there are those of them that are mentioned in the scriptures on the dry land, and they are a species of serpents.

LIVING CREATURE: which has life in it.

THAT MOVES [*haromeset*]: like the meaning of [the same word] with a *samekh* [in place of the *sin*], as in "...the foot tramples it [*tirasesenah*]..." (Isa. 26:6) and similar occurrences, and its meaning is movement and treading on the earth, as opposed to flying.

(22) AND [GOD] BLESSED: He decreed additional goodness for them, which is the meaning of "blessing" in every case.

SAYING: in every place where the linguist in the Holy Tongue mentions the words of the speaker, as they are, without changing the person from second to third, it is necessary that the "speaking" precede them, like "and he said [*wayomer*]" or "saying [*lebor*]," and the meaning is "*folgende*

*Norte*," or "*wie folgt*," as if it said, "and God blessed them with these words, 'Be fruitful and multiply etc.'" And if it did not add the word "saying" it would not be possible to say afterwards "be fruitful and multiply" in the second person. Rather, it would have to change to the person to the third person, and say, "and God blessed them that they would be fruitful and multiply etc." And remember this rule!

AND MULTIPLY: If it had only said "Be fruitful," one would beget one [offspring] and no more, therefore it added "and multiply," so that one would beget to many. And the imperative is found in place of the future, and likewise, "...and die on the mountain..." (Deut. 32:50), since this is not it his power or capability to do. And the meaning is that I give you the power to be fruitful and multiply.

AND LET THE BIRDS MULTIPLY ON THE EARTH: even though their creation was from the water, their blessing was on the land, that they should be fruitful and multiply upon it, for there is no bird that lays its eggs in the water and which grow there. They always dwell near the water and feed there, but they lay their eggs on the land, and they hatch there.

(23) FIFTH [*HAMISHI*]: the unpointed vowel letter that is between the *me* and the *shin* is in exchange for the *dagesh*.<sup>52</sup>

(24) CATTLE: these are the kinds that eat grass, be they

domesticated or wild.

CREEPING THINGS: the words of Rashi, "These are the creeping things that are low and creep on the ground, and it seems as though they drag along, because their walk is not recognized. Every expression of *rebes* [creeping] and *sherets* [swarm] in our language is *conbouvrie* in the vernacular." Thus far his words. And its meaning is "movement," *Regung* in German. And behold, the verb of creeping is also said in connection with the living creatures and the cattle, as it is written, "...over every living thing that moves on the earth..." (Gen. 1:28), and thus "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, birds, cattle, beasts, all swarming creature that swarm upon the earth..." (Gen.7:21). And it [this word] is written [in], "...when all the beasts of the forest creep forth..." (Ps. 104:20). Despite this, in every place where *rebes* is mentioned generally, the meaning is specifically the insects that drag along. And this is the meaning of the verb of creeping when it is said about all the living creatures which beget offspring in great numbers with continual movement. And despite this, every place where it says *sherets* in general, the intention is about this kind specifically.

AND THE BEASTS [*nehayeto*] OF THE EARTH: the final *naw* is additional, like the *naw* in "the son of Beor [*beno be'or*]."

(Num. 24:3,15)<sup>23</sup> Those which eat flesh are called beasts, and they are all declared unfit for consumption.

(25) AND [GOD] MADE: he established them in their form, in their correctness, in their stature.

(26) AND GOD SAID: is joined to the making of man [in one] verse because of the greatness of his merit, for his nature is not like the the nature of the beasts and the cattle which He created in the verse that precedes this, to show the additional honor and glory with which He adorned him above all living things, making him little less than God, giving him a discerning soul which recognizes its Creator, and which is never destroyed, and setting him to rule over all the acts of creation with the power of his intellect.<sup>24</sup> About his formation, it says "Let us make man..." as if the Holy One, praised be He, took counsel with his retinue, who are the angels of God and his hosts, saying, "now that I have created all this for the needs of man, for his use and his enjoyment, now the master will come to his castle; let us make man in the image of the heavenly creatures." And the meaning of image [*tselem*] is like form [*tsurah*], and it separates his special form from the form of the rest the living in wisdom, in intellect, and knowledge, practical ability, and in this he has the likeness and similarity with the angels on high. And with this he will have dominion and

rule with strength over the fish, the birds, the cattle, and everything which creeps. And the "cattle [*behemah*]" includes the "beasts [*hayah*]." And he should rule over the earth itself, to extract, to pull out, to dig, and to mine copper and iron. And the meaning of having dominion is the rule of a master over his servant, for he is the one who rules all. And it says "let them have dominion" in the plural since man is both male and female. Perhaps it hints with this that man would be political in nature, and would join with those who are like him, and would live with them in a political group; a man would help his brother to achieve success. And the individual does not rule over all the living and over all the earth itself, except with the help of the general group.

(27) AND [GOD] CREATED: creation is also together with this [making] for the honor of man, and to make it known that he was brought forth from nothingness with his knowledge and his intellect. And after it says "in his image," it reiterates and says "in the image of God He created him" to point out the meaning of the extra strength which man has, that he is in His form, and his special soul is similar to the celestial beings. And the form which it fitting for him is the likeness and image of his creator. God is in the heavens, and he alone is on earth, walking before him, as the translator said. And in the Zohar [47a], "'in our image,

after our likeness' the two being combined, so that man should be unique in the world and rule over all." And the words of Rashi, "'in His image' in the mold which was made for him, for everything was created by a command, but he was created by the hands [of God], as it says, '...and layest thy hand upon me...' (Ps. 139:5), he was made with a seal, like a coin which is made by means of a stamp, which they call *coineau* in the vernacular." Thus far his words. And in the manuscript "*coin* in the vernacular" is written, and it is correct. And in German it is *Stempel*, with which they strike coins.

MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM: for the creation was, from the beginning, male and female together, and their spirit was included in them, but the form was for the man alone, and construction of the rib was for the woman, as is related in the following chapter. Therefore, it mentions the creation here, and in the chapter below, the formation.

(28) FILL THE EARTH: "a blessing that they should fill the world because of their number. In my opinion, He blessed them that they should fill the earth, and that the nations should disperse according to their families and should populate the far ends of the world because of their numbers, and should not be in one place, like the thought of the people of the generation of the Dispersion." (the words of

Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed)

AND SUBDUED IT: He gave man the power and the rule over the earth, to do as he wanted with the cattle, and with the swarms, and all that crawls in the dust, and to build and to plant, and to extract and to mine and the like, for the establishment of the political group.

AND HAVE DOMINION OVER THE FISH: "He said that they should also have dominion over the fish of the sea which are hidden from them, and the birds of the heavens, which are not with them on the ground, also every wild beast. And He orders them according to their creation, the fish and the birds first, and after that the beasts, and thus Scripture says, 'Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea etc.' (Ps. 8:7,8,9)" (Nachmanides)

(29) AND GOD SAID "BEHOLD I HAVE GIVEN ETC": He gave Adam and his wife every seed bearing plant to eat, and the meaning is that "...they should eat the seeds of the plants like the grains of wheat and barley and legumes and others. And likewise, he gave them every tree, so that they should eat the fruit of it that was fit to eat. But the tree itself was not for men to eat, neither was the grass, until man was cursed, and it was said to him, '...and you shall eat the

plants of the field...' [Gen. 3:18]." (Nachmanides)

"And He did not permit Adam and his wife to kill any creature and to eat meat,[...] but when the sons of Noah came, He permitted them to eat meat, as it is said, 'Every moving thing that lives etc...as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything..., ' (Gen. 9:3) which means 'even as I permitted the green plants to Adam.'"

(Nachmanides)

(30) AND TO EVERY BEAST OF THE EARTH ETC.: He gave them all the green plants, not the fruit of the trees and the seeds.

(31) AND GOD SAW ETC.: The enlightened man will understand that on the days which preceded, it only says, "And God saw that it was good...", but here, on the sixth day, it says, "...everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good." And the meaning is that the specific objects of reality do not contain complete and definite goodness, but good and evil mixed and contained with one another. And many evils are found in the specific things that were created, and there are those of them that are continued from the point of view that they were created, for it prevented any creation from being complete in relation to the perfect end, and it was necessary that it be composed of existence and absence, and the absence is the source of evil. And some of them continue in the chain of cause and effect, according to

the chance of time and its accidents. And some of them continued by choice, and they are the evil qualities and acts, and all of them are evil from one side, and good from the other, evil from the point of view of the specific part, and good from the point of view of the general, all of it, for there is no reality at all to definite evil with an evil purpose, since it is an impossible thing and contains an internal contradiction, for every existing thing, from the point of view of its existence, is good. And were these evil things not good from one aspect, they would be unable to exist in the universe created by the Good One who does good, who loves goodness with a perfect love, and abhors definite evil with complete abhorrence. And know from this that the specific evil is also good and fitting to the intended end of all creation, and must exist, as is the meaning when it says, "For every thing there is a season, and a time for every matter..." (Qoh. 3:1). And I will give you an example: death is bad, from the point of view that it is the loss of life, however, from the general point of view, it is good, since destruction and existence are intertwined, stuck together, and joined, so that every loss is the cause of an existence, and every existence is the cause of a loss. And through both, every creation is changed from one form to another, according to the desired purpose of God, may He be

blessed. Likewise, the evils of choice and of acts are evil from the point of view of the one who chooses them; desire and free will, however, are a great good and advantage for the world in general, and existence would not be possible without them, and there is no free will without the possibility of a thing and its opposite. The evil choices, therefore, are also good, from that point of view, and God will also turn them and direct them to goodness, with His providence and mercy, since this is the purpose of creation: to correct the evil and change it to good. Therefore, in all the days which preceded, it only mentions the specifics of creation, and the complete good is not found among them, but rather, evil and good mixed. However, from the point of view that evil is also necessary for the continuence of good, God, may He be praised, saw that it fit the purpose and desired its continuence, not from the point of view that it is evil, but rather, from the aspect that it is necessary for the good. He desired death, not because it is a loss of a form, but, rather, because it a cause of existence. And thus He desired the evil inclination, not because it leads men away to evil, but because it is necessary for the continuence of the world. And this is the meaning of "and God saw that it was good." But now, on the sixth day, when all of the work was completely finished, God saw all that he

had made, and behold, there was no evil at all in the world as a whole, for, from the point of view of the general, everything was good and very fitting for the end which God, may He be praised, intended. And if it were possible for this end to be achieved in a manner which agreed more closely to the desire of the Creator, there is no doubt that He would have chosen this manner, but since He chose this rule and order, there is no doubt that it agrees with the desire of the Creator, may He be praised. And through this, the intended end by Him will be achieved in the way which is the most good and satisfactory before Him, and that is the meaning of "behold, it was very good". The particulars of creation are called "good," but the general is called "very good." Understand this, and know and be enlightened by what our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said in *Genesis Rabbah*, " 'And behold, it was very good,' and 'behold it was very good,' this is death," [9:5] and they also mentioned that it is the evil inclination [9:7], and that it is the punishment of evil [9:8]. And in the *Zohar* [47a] to Genesis, "'And God saw all that he had made, behold, it was very good.' Here the word 'very' makes good the omission of the words 'that it was good' in the account of the second day. On the second day death was created, and according to our colleagues, the expression 'very good' refers to death." And

in the matter of the generality of creation, and that which is desired in it, I found there a precious section [Zohar 47a] "God now also saw all the generations which were to be, and everything which was to happen in the world in each generation before it came into existence. 'Which he had made': these words indicate all the works of the creative period, recounted in the section Bereshit, in which was created the foundation and basis of all that was to be and come to pass in the world subsequently. God foresaw all, and placed all potentiality in the work of creation." And according to this, included in this verse is everything which He made, not only things which came forth then into existence, but also everything which would become and be produced afterwards, to the end of all the generations. And about the totality of this reality alone, which contains all the worlds and all the times, it is said that it is very good, and understand this!

A SIXTH DAY [YOM HASHISHI]: the adjective is found with the definite article *he*, and that which is described without it, which does not follow the rule. And R. Abraham ibn Ezra said, "its meaning is 'the day that is sixth from the first day'; so also 'the seventh day.' Similarly, we find 'a man of Israel [*'ish hayisraeli*]' (Lev. 24:10), and many like examples. So also 'the firmament of the heavens [*raqi'a*

*hashamayim*]’ [Gen. 1:14] which is ‘the firmament which is the heavens.’” (This, however, is not such good proof, since it is in the construct.) And since the definite article *he* is not written with the preceeding days, but only with the sixth day alone, therefore it was the opinion of the German translator that it related to “and the heavens...were finished” which is said in the verse which comes after it.<sup>25</sup> And its meaning is that it was the evening and the morning of the sixth day on which the work of the heavens and the earth and all their host was completed, and all become a complete unity, clinging together, intertwined, and fastened one to another, and thus it is found in the *Zohar*. [47a] “[The word sixth *hashishi*] here contains the definite article, which was not used in numbering the other days. This is to indicate etc...they were completed from every side and equiped with everything.”

2 (1) WERE FINISHED [*WAYEKHULU*]: from the conjugation in which the subject is not mentioned, in the pattern of “all the mountains were covered [*wayekhusu*], and its meaning is “were completed [*nishleu*]. And the sea is included with the earth, for they are as one unit.<sup>26</sup>

AND ALL THE HOST OF THEM: the host of the earth are, as have been mentioned, the beasts, the creeping things, fish, and

all that grows [i.e. plants]. And the host of the heavens are the two great lights, and the aforementioned stars, as is the meaning of, "And beware lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven..." (Deut. 4:19) And it also includes the separate intelligences, as is the meaning of "...I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him..." (1Kgs. 22:19) and thus, "...the Lord will punish the host of heaven, in heaven..." (Isa. 24:21). And behold, this is an allusion to the creation of the angels in the act of creation, and likewise the souls of men are included in the host of heaven.

(2) [GOD] FINISHED [MAYEKHAL]: from the *PI'EL* conjugation, and it would be proper if it was *MAYEKHALEH*, except that the *he* is dropped, as is its way with the conversive *nan*.

ON THE SEVENTH DAY GOD: the idea is that on the seventh day the work had already been finished and completed, like "...on the first day you shall put away..." (Ex. 12:15) means "it was already put away." For it is the rule of every tense to take place during some span of time, sometimes it speaks about the beginning of that span, and sometimes about the duration of that time, and sometimes about its end. And in the languages of the [other] people, the past is found in three types; the incomplete past, the

past which is completed now, and the past which is already completed, like *er vollendete, er hat vollendet, er hatte vollendet*. And in the Holy Tongue, there is one common rule for past which is completed now and the past which is already completed, therefore the word *wayekhulu* is translated into German as *es warden vollendet*, and the word *wayekhal* is *er hatte vollendet*, for the work was finished on the sixth day, and it already had been finished by the seventh day.[my italics] And the incomplete past is still said in Hebrew with the *waw* that changes the future to the past, as is well known. And the rule of the future is similar, there is a future which will be present at that time, and a future perfect, like "put away [*tashbitul*]," which was mentioned above, the meaning of which is that it will already have been put away. And it is possible to call this future a tense combining the future and the past, and see our explanation to the verse "...and your offspring, born to you after them..." (Gen. 48:6) and the verse "...and has not brought it to the door of the tent of meeting..." (Lev. 17:4) and the verse "...for our inheritance has come to us on this side of the Jordan..." (Num. 32:19). And our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said "'And on the seventh day, God finished...', what was the world lacking? Rest; the Sabbath came, and rest came."<sup>7</sup>

The meaning is that it is conceivable in some way to say that all the work was not finished until the seventh day proper, since on all the other six days a thing was newly made which had not previously existed, whether it was a new substance or a new form which came forth into the bounds of existence by the desire of the Creator in the beginning, and this is the meaning of "work." However, the world was lacking rest and a cessation of work, for it had not yet behaved according to its custom, and things did not follow the law and order allotted for them from the Creator, may He be praised, in the chain of causes and effects. But this is the meaning of rest in the act of creation, and now all was formed, and nothing new was produced from nothingness to existence. And understand from this that when our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said "ten things were created on the Sabbath at twilight," [Abot 5:8, Pesah. 54a] that among these miraculous acts were rest and work. They contain the invention which had not been from nothingness to existence. And they contain the custom of the world according to the chain of cause and effect, according to their statement, may their memory be blessed, from the conditions which the Holy One, praised be He, set for the act of creation, and, as a result, they had something from the sixth day and something from the seventh day, work from the sixth day, and cessation

from work from the seventh. And it is like Sabbath eve at twilight, which is part day and part night, and understand this!

HIS WORK [MELAKHTO]: it is not from the absolute state *melakhah*, for if so, the *tav* would have to be the weak letter<sup>20</sup> like the form from *tsedaqah* is *tsidqato*, and from *berakhah* is *birkhato*. But this is from the absolute state *MELEKHET*, from the pattern of *MISHNERET* and it would be proper to be *MILEKHET*, except for the quiescence of the *alef*, according to its rule, in most cases the *segol* is transferred to the *lamed*, and the *shwa* of the *lamed* is [transferred] to the *mem*, and the *hiriq* is dropped.

(3) SO GOD BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY: He placed additional goodness and advantage on it over the other days, AND HALLOWED IT: He separated it from the rest of the days for the worship of God, that no work should be done on it, except to meditate and rejoice in what God had done, and to sing praises about the works of His hands.

WHICH HE HAD DONE IN CREATION: Nachmanides interpreted, "that 'he rested...from all his work which he had done' out of nothing, to make from it all the works mentioned on the six days. Thus the verse is stating that God rested from creating and forming, from the creation He created on the first day, and from the formation he formed on the rest of

the days. And it is possible that the word *la'asot* [to make] is connected with the expression above in the verse, 'because God rested on it from all his work which he created' from 'making [*mila'asot*]'. So also are the verses, 'until he ceased to measure [*lispor*] it' (Gen. 41:19)... 'And they left off building [*livnot*] the city...' (Gen. 11:8)... 'Take heed that you do not go up [*'alot*] into the mountain' (Ex. 19:12)...and thus in many other cases." Thus far his words. But the placing of the accent does not agree with his last interpretation, since the word *melakhto* is marked with the accent *zagef qatan*, therefore, the German translator chose the first interpretation [i.e. against Nachmanides]. And there are those who interpret *la'asot* [to make] as referring to the created things, that He placed power in the created things to do the actions and perform the tasks which were set for them, each one according to its nature. And according to this it would have been proper to be translated as *fortzuzirken*.

(4) THESE: which are mentioned above.

GENERATIONS: the story of the act of how the heavens and earth were produced and came into existence.

IN THE DAY GOD MADE: "to teach you that all of them were created on the first day" are the words of Rashi, but according to its simple meaning "in the day" is like "at the

time," like "in the day you eat of it you shall die" (below, v. 17), and there are many similar cases. And "made" [*'asot*] is the establishment of a thing in its proper character, and it is like "and hastened to prepare [*la'asot*] it" (*ibid*, 18:7) and thus, in Isaiah (43:7), "whom I created [*beratiw*]" and after that "whom I formed [*yetsartiw*]" and after that "and made [*'asitiv*]." The creation [*beri'ah*] is the coming forth of the substance from nothingness to the bounds of existence, in German *Schaffung*, the formation [*yetsirah*] is giving form to the substance, in German *Bildung*, and the making is the final establishment of the thing in its character, in German, *Perfektigung* [*sic*]. "And in the day that [the Lord God] made etc." is related to the aforementioned six days of creation.

THE LORD GOD: in the chapter above, it only mentions the name God [*elohim*], but here it says the Lord God [*YHWH elohim*], the Lord is the one whose name is God, who rules and judges all, and this is its interpretation in every case, according to its simple meaning, Lord is He who is God. And our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, interpreted these two names as the attribute of Justice and the attribute of Mercy. And it is plausible that the first chapter, from 'In the beginning' to 'had made' [Gen. 1:1-2:3] was received by special individuals from the days

of the holy fathers, and it is possible that it is from the days of Adam and Seth, transmitted by mouth from the fathers to the sons. And these holy ones would teach their sons and their students the secret of the act of creation and the origination of the universe. And from here, this faith was publicized in all the ends of the world to every people and tongue, so that there is no people and tongue found which does not have a little knowledge or an allusion of this subject.<sup>59</sup> However, this tradition was perverted among some of them by the vanity of those affecting wisdom, and the lies of the poets who turned their faces to heaven, and concocted, on their own, things which were not so, to draw away the hearts of the multitude, upon which the light of the Torah of God had not shone. And they mixed truth with falsehood, and nothing remained for them except small allusions, like the light which shine in the darkness of light and deep darkness. And behold, it is well known that the proper name, which teaches about the personal providence of God for special men and the devotion of God for those who preserve His words, was only publicized by the signs and portents which He performed for the children of Israel, when He brought them out from Egypt, and separated them for His service, as we will explain, God willing, about the verse, "...but by my name the Lord I did not make myself known to

them..." (Ex. 6:3), see there. Since, when Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, wrote the Torah from the mouth of God, he set this traditional chapter in the beginning, but only mentioned the word *elohim* in it, to show the complete power and rule over every possible thing, to bring forth to the bounds of existence, and to make it behave according to His will. And he added and said, "these are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the Lord God made," [Gen. 2:4] to show that this essence that has power over all is the revered name, who looks after His servants, and who reveals His secret to His prophets. and who is there for them at the time when they call to Him, He is the Lord God. And the German translator interpreted this revered name as *das ewige Wesen*, and sometimes as *der Ewige*, which contains "was, is, and will be," see the Book of Exodus, the verse "this is my name forever" (Ex. 3:15), for that is its place. And Onkelos translates the name of God in the first chapter with the word "Lord [yy]" and the words "the Lord God" he interpreted as "Lord God [yy *elohim*]" and I do not know his intention.

(5) WHEN [NO] PLANT OF THE FIELD ETC.: The purpose of this chapter is to inform you of the particulars of the formation of Adam and his wife, for in the previous chapter, it only mentioned that God created them, male and female. Now it

will inform you how the providence of God, the revered essence, was upon Adam, to regulate everything for his good, and to form a helper for him from his ribs, and gave them a commandment, and set aside for the man knowledge to understand His creatures etc. And I have seen,<sup>60</sup> in the *baraita* of R. Eliezer the son of R. Yosi Hagelili, which Rashi, may his memory be blessed, quotes in this chapter, "concerning the 32 hermeneutical rules by which the Torah is interpreted, [that] this is one of them, a general statement, followed by a specific act, the latter is then a particular of the former. 'And He created man' is the general statement, it conceals His creation after that, and it conceals His deeds. Then it repeats and explains, 'And the Lord God formed etc.' [v. 7] And He planted for him the garden of Eden, and He placed him in the garden of Eden, and he made a deep sleep fall upon him. He who hears this might think that this is another account altogether, but it is only a particular of the first [account]. And so with the animals it repeats and writes, 'So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field...' [v. 19] in order to explain, 'and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them...' [*ibid.*] and to teach about the winged birds that they were created from the mire." Thus far his words. And remember this rule, for it is a great foundation

and essence for the understanding of Scripture, and by it many places in the Scripture will be explained for you, which would be impossible to understand without this rule. And sometimes all the commentators are unable, and not one man of valor is able to understand the simple meaning of the text, but if you remember this rule by which the Torah is interpreted, you will find that they are simple things, very easy to understand, as you will see, God willing, in several places in our explanation. And behold, in order to mention the particulars of the formation of Adam and Eve and all that happened to them, it was necessary to mention the garden of Eden, and because of the garden of Eden, it begins with the third day, and says that it was then the intention of the Creator, may He be praised, that there were not yet plants [*siyah*] of the field on the earth. (*siyah* is a tree, and likewise "under one of the bushes [*sihi*]..." (Gen. 21:15) and "Among the bushes [*sihi*] they bray..." (Job. 30:7)) and the grass of the field had not yet flourished, "for [God] had not caused it to rain etc."

WAS YET [*TEREM*] IN THE EARTH: Rashi interpreted, "Every *tere* in Scripture has the meaning 'not yet [*'od lo*],' and it does not mean 'before,' neither can it be conjugated to say 'cause to be not yet [*hi'tri*]' ...and this proves it, as well as another [verse], '...you do not yet [*tere*] fear...'

(Ex. 9:30), so this too you explain, was 'not yet' on the earth...had not yet sprouted." Thus far his words. And Ibn Ezra in the portion *Shofot* differed with this when he said that according to the opinion of Rashi, *tere* is like "no [lo]," but this word is not found as he thought, for in every instance, the matter follows immediately, for after "but before [*tere*] they lay down..." (Gen. 19:4) it is written "the men of the city, the men of Sodom...surrounded the house..." [*libid.*] and "Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come..." (1Sam. 2:15) and "Before [*tere*] they call I will answer..." (Isa. 65:24) And Nachmanides also wrote that Ibn Ezra perceived it well and interpreted it as meaning "before." And Qimhi joined them in his [*Sefer ha' Shorashim*], under the root *tet-resh-ayin*. And behold, in the verse which is before us, after *tere* there is no dependent clause, and it must be interpreted according to their words that the verse "but a mist etc." [v.6] is the dependent clause for the first half of the previous verse, and the phrase "had caused it to rain," is like a parenthetical clause, and it comes at the end of the verse, which is a greater pause than the *etnah* which is before it, as in "And let them make me a sanctuary (that I may dwell in their midst.) according to all that I show you etc." (Ex. 25:8-9). And its meaning here is in this manner, "before

there were any plants of the field on the earth, and before all the grasses of the field grew (for the Lord God had not yet caused it to rain upon the earth, and man, too, was not then there to work the ground), then a mist rose from the ground and watered the face of the earth. And as a result, the grasses and the plants flourished on the third day." And Nachmanides interpreted likewise here. And the *MAN* of *na'ed* [and a mist] joins the two sentences that are related in time, as I wrote in the introduction. However, this interpretation is very tenuous in meaning, for according to the opinion of Rashi, here is a definite sentence that there were not yet plants and grasses on the earth, it fits better as the giving of the reason. Why were there none?—Since he had not yet caused it to rain. And why had He not yet caused it to rain?—Because man was not yet there. But according to the opinion of the aforementioned commentators, that this half of the sentence is only a temporal instruction, as if to say that this refers to the time before the the existence of plants and the grass, it is not necessary to ask the reason for the answer would be that He had not yet caused it to rain, for, without doubt, that before there were plants, there were still no plants, and before they flourished, they still had not flourished, and why must one ask a reason for this? Therefore, I have chosen the opinion of Rashi, may his

memory be blessed, which is correct, in my opinion. And Ibn Ezra attributed to Rashi, may his memory be blessed, a thing which he did not say, for he did not say that the explanation of *tere* is like "no [*lo*]," but rather, that it is like "not yet [*'adayin lo*]," or "still not [*'od lo*]." And thus Ibn Ezra, may his memory be blessed, himself wrote in his interpretation to the book of Isaiah (65:24), and these are his words: "According to my opinion, *tere* is like "yet [*'od*]," and if it is found with an additional *bet*, it is like "before." Thus far his words. And these, his words, are close to the words of Rashi, may his memory be blessed, for there is no doubt that he would agree to the negative addition to the word *tere*, and say "not yet [*'od lo*]," since we found it written, "Before [*tere*] he had done speaking..." (Gen. 24:15) For there it is impossible to interpret it in any way without the negative, like "he had not yet [*'od lo*] finished speaking," as Rashi, may his memory be blessed, wrote. And know that in every place where Rashi, may his memory be blessed, wrote "not yet [*'od lo*]," the meaning is that this is its translation, for *'od lo* is translated as *'ad la* [in Aramaic]. And in truth, the opinion of Rashi, may his memory be blessed, is that the explanation of the word *tere* in every place is *'adayin lo* or *'od lo*. However, sometimes it is continued in the next sentence,

like "before they lay down the men of the city etc." [Gen. 19:4] The meaning is that they had not yet lain down and the men of the city surrounded. "Before they call I will answer...", [Isa. 65:24] it means "they will not yet have called out, but I will answer them." And sometimes, there is no continuation after the sentence at all, and it is a definite sentence like, "...you do not yet fear the Lord your God...", (Ex. 9:30) "...do you not yet [t<sup>ere</sup>u] understand that Egypt is ruined?" (*ibid.* 10:7), which Rashi interpreted as "do you not yet [ha'od lo] know that Egypt is ruined?" And this is what Rashi interpreted here, "were not yet on the earth...had not yet flourished," since, in his opinion, it is a definite sentence. This is also the opinion of our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, in *Genesis Rabbah*,<sup>61</sup> that on the third day, they stood on the opening of the land and the earth, and they flourished on the sixth day, after He had caused it to rain.

AND THERE WAS NO MAN TO TILL THE GROUND: it gives the reason why it says, why had He not yet caused it to rain? Since there was no-one to till the ground, and no-one to recognize the function of the rains, and to enjoy them until man came. And our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said "there was no [man] to till the ground," that on the third day the plants stood just below land, and they flourished on the

sixth day, after He had caused it to rain.

(6) BUT A MIST<sup>62</sup> WENT UP FROM THE EARTH: even though on the second day, the upper waters had already been separated from the lower waters on the second day. And the lower waters were gathered in one place on the third day, the face of the earth was still soft and very wet, from the damp mists that came up from the earth, and the earth was not yet fit for growing greenery, for a cloud clothed it and a fog covered it, and the air was not sufficiently pure.

(7) FORMED [WAYITSAR]: its root is *yod-tsade-resh*, and it is from the *qal* declension. And the pronominal preformative is found with a *hiriq*, like "When Noah awoke [wayiqats]..." (Gen. 9:24)

MAN OF DUST FROM THE GROUND: he is called man [ada~~m~~] since he was formed from the ground [adawah], and it is also the proper name for the first man, and an descriptive word which teaches about his origin, and therefore the definite article is conceivable with it.

AND BREATHED INTO HIS NOSTRILS THE BREATH OF LIFE: "the Scripture hints to us with this the superiority of the human soul, its foundation and its secret, for He mentioned His full name with it [Lord God], and said that He [himself] breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, to make known that it did not come to him from the elements, and also not

by development from the separate intelligences, but it was the spirit of the great God, '...from his mouth come knowledge and understanding..., ' [Prov. 2:5] for the one who breathes into the nostrils of another, gives him some of his spirit. And this is why it says, '...the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand..., ' (Job 32:8) since the soul is from the foundation of *binah* [understanding], by way of truth and faith." (Nachmanides) And because of this it is called a soul [*neshamah*], since it is the "breath [*nishmat*] of God." And by this man became a living soul, like its translation "a speaking spirit [*leruah ne'alela*]," the meaning is a speaking soul, for the power of speech is one of the actions of the intelligent being, and the cattle and the beasts do not speak, but only man alone, for that is his difference and his superiority. And behold, even though, in the soul of man there are different and changing powers, like the power of movement, the power of feeling, the power of imagination, the power of memory and arousing etc., as the scholars mentioned, with all of this, the essence of all is one, and they are all the actions of the soul, and only the soul is unique, and the multiplicity is from the side of its actions. And the feeling of the man is not like the feeling of the animals, and his imagination is not like the imagination of the animals, as Nachmanides, may his memory

be blessed, mentioned in his introduction to Tractate *Avot*, (chapter 1) and these are his words, "Know that the soul of man is one, and it has many different actions. They call some of these actions souls, and it is thought that because of this, man has many souls. And sometimes they call them powers, etc. However, it is said about man and the rest of the living creatures 'feeling,' with the sharing of the word alone, not that the feeling which is in man is the feeling that is in the rest of living creatures, etc." And the rabbi continues and warns about this matter, by giving a very fine parable. And in general, if we counted and numbered the actions of the soul, we would attribute to it different souls and powers. Not that it is divided like the parts of the composite body, for it is a single and simple essence, which does not accept division in any way. And this is the intention of the Scripture, that the creation of man is separate from the creation of the rest of the living creatures, for he was formed from the dust of the ground. And he was without life and feeling and movement, and the exalted God, in His honor and by Himself, breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and by the power of this precious breath movement, feeling, imagination, intelligence and understanding were produced in him. And he became the possessor of all those powers, and in general he became a

speaking living being, and that is the meaning of "and man became a living being."

IN HIS NOSTRILS [BE'APAW]: according to the rule, it should be *be'aneḥaw*, in the pattern of "...for thou wast angry [*anafta*] with me..." (Isa. 12:1) and the *nun* is replaced by the *dagesh* in the *pe*, but in the Aramaic language, the *nun* is written, as in "his face [*anfohi*]" (Dan. 3:19). And it is like *ḥiṭi* [wheat] whose root is *ḥet-nun-ṭet*, and the *nun* is swallowed by the doubling of the *ṭet*, but in Aramaic it is said, "measures of wheat [*ḥinṭin*]." (Ezra 7:22)

(8) AND THE LORD GOD PLANTED A GARDEN IN EDEN, IN THE EAST: Onkelos translated *ḥiqeden* ["in the east"] as the time "from of old [*ḥileqadmin*]." And this is the opinion of our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, but they differed about this, whether this was desired before the creation of the world, as when they said, "The garden of Eden is one of seven things that preceded the world," [cf. b. Pesah. 54a] or whether the intention is before the creation of Adam. And according to this it would have been necessary<sup>63</sup> to render it in German like this, "*Das ewige Wesen Gott hatte lange früher einen Garten gepflanzt.*" And Rashi interpreted, "'in the east': in the eastern part of Eden." But he did not interpret it as "in the eastern part of the world." It is possible that he thought that the garden of Eden was in the

west, but there are those who say that the garden of Eden was in the eastern part of the world. (However, from the simple meaning of the text which is before us (Gen. 3:24) we learn that the garden of Eden was in the west, and from there Adam was driven out to the eastern part of the world, see our explanation there.) And behold, in the east was the beginning of the settlement of men, and from there the species spread out, and the peoples separated according to their languages in their lands, as is known from all the stories of histories and early tales of every people and language. They all testify about every area and every location, that every settlement was transferred there from the eastern land. And Scripture mentions that in the eastern part of the world is a place of pleasure [*'eden*] and rejoicing, in a district of calm air and weather, created for the purpose of rejoicing, fatness and oil in the plantation of God, something about which to marvel. And the Holy One, praised be He, prepared a place where Adam could dwell, and decreed that there should be a garden in that place. And garden [*gan*] is from the root *gimel-nun-nun*, and it is a place of trees that make a covering with their branches and protect [*megini*] those who sit under them. And there he placed the man whom he had made.

(9) AND OUT OF THE GRAOUND THE LORD GOD MADE TO GROW: the

verse speaks about the ground of the garden, which existed there at the beginning of the verse "Let the earth put forth vegetation." (Gen. 1:11) And the earth brought forth every tree pleasing for the eye to behold and good to eat. This agrees with what we wrote above, that according to the first meaning, before the earth was cursed because of the sin of Adam, the earth only brought forth fruit trees fit for men to eat.

THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN: It says "in the midst of the garden," it does not say "in the garden." And, furthermore, it says "of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden," (Gen. 3:3) and it does not make it known by another name. We learn that this allusion was enough to separate it from the rest of the trees, therefore, in Targum Onkelos it is "in the middle of the garden [*bimetsiy'at ginta*]." And there were the two trees, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge, in the middle of the garden, as if one enclosed grove had been made in the middle of the garden, and in it were these two trees. And this "middle" means near the middle, for it is already said<sup>64</sup> with regard to the exact middle, no-one could know the true central point except God alone.

AND THE TREE OF LIFE: a tree whose fruit gives long life to those who eat it.

AND THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL [ME'ETS HADA'AT TOU MERA']: like "to the tent of Sarah his mother [ha'ohelah Sarah imo]," (Gen. 24:67) "the ark of the covenant [ha'aron habrit]," (Josh. 3:14) and many like these where the construct is found with the definite article. And the grammarians said that it is like "the ark (aron) of the covenant," (Josh. 3:14) "the knowledge (da'at) of good and evil." And about the tree of knowledge, Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, mentions that "the commentators have said that its fruit caused a desire for sexual intercourse, and therefore they covered their nakedness after they ate it. They quote a similar expression, the saying of Barzilai the Gileadite, '...can I discern what is pleasant and what is not..., ' (2Sam. 19:36) meaning that the sexual desire was removed from him. But in my opinion, this interpretation is not correct, since the [serpent] said, '...you will be like God, knowing good and evil...' [Gen. 3:5] And if you would say that the serpent lied to the woman in order to persuade her [Nachmanides: he lied to her], behold, God said, '...behold, the man has become like one of us knowing good and evil...' [*ibid.* v. 22]. And they [the rabbis] already said, 'three stated the truth and perished from the world, and these are: the serpent, the spies, and Doeg the Edomite.' [b. Sanh. 90a]" And the opinion of Nachmanides,

may his memory be blessed, "is that man's original nature was that he did whatever was proper for him to do naturally, just as the heavens and all their hosts do, 'faithful workers whose work is truth, and who do not change from their prescribed course,' [cf. b. Sanh. 42a] and in whose deeds there is no love or hatred. Now it was the fruit of the tree that gave rise to will and desire, that those who ate it should choose a thing or its opposite, for good or for evil, That is why it is called 'the tree of knowledge [da'at] of good and evil,' for da'at in our language is used to express will. Thus in their language [the rabbis] 'they have taught this only with regard to one whose will [sheda'ato] is to return.' [b. Pesah. 6a]...And in the language of Scripture, '...what is man that thou dost regard him [wateda'ehu],' (Ps. 144:3) meaning that 'You should desire and want him,' '...I know you [yeda'tikha] by name' (Ex. 33:12) meaning 'I have chosen you of all people.' Similarly, Barzilai's expression, '...can I discern [ha'eda'] what is pleasant and what is not..., ' (2Sam. 19:36) means that he had lost the power of thought, no longer choosing a thing or loathing it, and he would eat without tasting and hear a song without enjoying it. Now at that time sexual intercourse between Adam and his wife was not a matter of desire, instead, at the time of begetting

offspring they came together and propagated. Therefore all the limbs were equal [Nachmanides: as the face and hands] in their eyes, and they were not ashamed of them. But after they ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge, he possessed the power of choice; he could now willingly do evil or good to himself or to others. This, on the one hand, is a godlike attribute; but as far as man is concerned, it is bad because through it, he has a will and a desire. It is possible that Scripture intended to allude to this matter when it said, '...that God made man upright, but they have sought out many devices...' [Qoh. 7:29] The 'uprightness' is that man should keep to one right path, and 'sought out many devices' is man's search for deeds which change according to his choice." Thus far his words. And the opinion of Maimonides, may his memory be blessed, is close to this, except that according to his words, good and evil are enjoyment and ugliness, and they are not, according to his opinion, among the axioms at all, but rather from the self-evident ideas. And it is a well known fact that the Rabbi, may his memory be blessed, followed the system of Aristotle in this matter, when he mentioned, in several places in his essays, that there is not necessarily good and evil at all, but rather falsehood and truth. And good and evil are matters that are self-evident to all men, and they have no effect on the

intellect at all. And about that which it says, "...you will be like *elohim*, knowing good and evil...", [Gen. 3:5] he already wrote "...that every Hebraist knows that the word *elohim* is equivocal, designating the deity, the angels, and the rulers governing the cities. And Onkelos the proselyte, peace be upon him, has made it clear, and his clarification is correct, that when Scripture says, '...you will be like *Elohim* knowing good and evil...', the last sense is intended, for he has translated, 'and you shall be as rulers [*utehon keravrevin*].'" [Guide, I:2] Thus far his words. And the Rabbi did not mention at all the statement of God, "...behold, man has become like one of us etc.," which is very difficult, according to his interpretation. And Onkelos translated it "behold, man has become unique in the world because of his action, knowing good and evil," and the word "from us [*meenu*]" is related to the man, not to God. But this is very forced, and I do not know his intention in regard to the simple meaning of the verse, for what is the meaning of "behold the man has become unique in the world because of his action to know good and evil (see our explanation there), and except for this, we do not agree with the Rabbi [Nachmanides], may his memory be blessed, in that which he said about the self-evident ideas. And it appears, in truth, that good and evil are from the axioms,

and pleasure and ugliness are not synonyms for good and evil, since good and evil are said from the point of view of the intellect, and and pleasure and ugliness from the point of view of the senses. And there are convincing proofs for this, but this is not the place to discuss it at length.

And behold, Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, in his commentary, which we mentioned, was careful of this, and according to his opinion, there is a great advantage and extreme superiority in the idea of good and evil, and it is an attribute of God. Rather that it is bad in regard to man, since he has a will and a desire, and this is the most correct way, and I will append an explanation of his words for you. As is appears in his commentary, before the sin, man did not have any choice or desire, but rather, he did what was proper for him to do naturally; this is similar to the celestial bodies, as the Rabbi mentioned in his commentary. This is a very difficult thing to overcome, and it is not my intention to expound on the many doubts that arise about this. However, I will inform you of the opinion of the German translator with their permission [?], and these are his words. "Before I answer, I will preface this with a introduction for you. Every act of creation, and everything which the Scripture relates about what happens to Adam and Eve, to Cain and Abel, everything is true and

faithful, without doubt, for what is told is what happened to those individuals in actual reality. But in them, there is an allusion and an example of what happened to all the race of man in general, for the events of Adam and his sons, and that which happened to them specifically, this is what will happen to the entire race in general, and for this reason, the Scripture goes on at length about these details, and the enlightened man will understand from them everything that happens to men from their creation to the end of all the generations. And behold, man has an intellectual power and a power of desire. With the intellectual power, he perceives truths, and distinguishes between truth and falsehood, and between good and evil. The thing which leads to success is called "good," and that which prevents it is called "evil." And with the power of desire, he longs for the good and clings to it, and flees from evil, and it is the aid and strengthener of the intellect. And good and evil, from the point of view of the senses are called "pleasure and ugliness," and behold, the clinging to good will produce joy, and the clinging to evil will produce suffering. And there is true good and imaginary good, and thus true and imaginary evil. True good leads to true joy, and imaginary good leads to imaginary joy, and thus with evil and with suffering. And those who preceded us have

already said that there is nothing higher than joy in goodness, and nothing lower than suffering in evil. And behold, from the joining of the power of perception and the power of desire, the attributes of the soul are produced. And they are the abilities to do good or to do evil to himself or to others, all of which are dependent upon the perception of the man, and his distinguishing between good and evil, according to the power of desire that is in him to do good and avoid evil. And because of the completeness of the essence of the enlightened man, there is produced in him a relationship and an equilibrium between the power of desire and the power of perception, and then the honorable attributes are produced in him, since according to the ability of the power of perception to differentiate between good and evil, so the desire will grow, and the love of good and the hatred of evil will be victorious. And the essence of the enlightened man will be aroused to cling to the good. And like this our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said "the greater a man is than his fellow, the greater is his [evil] inclination than him." [cf. b. Sukk. 52a] But if the balance between these powers is missing, lesser and inferior attributes come forth from them, for if the power of desire overcomes the power of the intellect, it will direct the man towards permitted desires and sensual joy, and he will

pursue pleasure and imaginary good, and will forsake the true good. And sometimes he will see with his eyes and understand with his mind the true good which brings him to success, and the force of the desire which conquers with its power the rule of the intellect, will deceive him to go after the pleasures of the body, and he will sink in the pursuit of sensual pleasure. And this is the cause for all sin and all disobedience in man.

If, however, the power of perception conquers the desire, a man will neglect doing the good deeds which are desired, and he will not reach the level of a valorous man of great acts, who becomes as strong as a lion to do what is good and upright, and wages a holy war with everything which holds him back, and frightens and opposes him. And this man, because of the small amount of trouble and travail that comes to him from the good deed, becomes lax from it, and sits in idleness and negligence at the sound of a driven leaf [cf. Lev. 26:36], and in the end, his perception will be confused, and he will not succeed with the power of his intellect and the spirit of his understanding, like the meaning of that which our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, mentioned about one whose wisdom is greater than his acts, that his wisdom will not endure. [c.f. Abot 3:9] Then God made man upright on the earth and set the

relationship of equality and the fitting balance between his intellect and his desire, and if he was placed and remained in this upright character, he would not be led astray from the good path by the force of the power of desire at all, except as a result of a lack of perception, that he might think that the good is evil, and that the evil is good, and this would only happen occasionally, apart from the fact that a lack of perception is not a sin, and a lack of knowledge is not disobedience, if it were not in the power of the one who was lacking to add to his knowledge and his perception, as in the matter which our sages, may their memory be blessed, mentioned 'a mistake in Talmud is accounted as intentional.' [b. B. Mes. 33b] And about this matter, even if man was endowed with choice and desire before the sin, in any event, he would not be likely to fall into the snare of lust or the trap of sensual pleasure, if his desire was related and balanced with his intellect in a fitting and equal relationship, according to the intention of the Creator, may He be praised, and in a way that would bring him to success and to the true good. And Adam and his wife desired intercourse, and took pleasure in this desire in a proper measure that fit the purpose of continuation of the species, and sexual desire, if it was of this quality is not a reproof or a degradation for man, as some of the

scholars thought; in fact, it is the opposite, for it is for his enhancement. Therefore Adam and his wife went naked and were not embarrassed, for embarrassment had not yet come to man, nor the shame of exposing his limbs, except from the side of conquering of lust, for the imagination wanders here and there when it sees uncovered limbs. And it arouses the lust and desire in a measure, place, and way which is not fitting the purpose, as is well known. And behold, it was one of the properties of the tree of knowledge to strengthen the power of desire and to add to its strength, so that when Adam ate from it, he became like the angels on high in his power of desire. And the strengthening of this desire, and the strength of its power is a great virtue and great advantage from the point of view of these celestial beings, since it is balanced with the level of their perception in a fitting measure, and according to the level of their perception and their intellect, thus the desire increases in them to do the will of their Creator, to love the good with a strong love, and to hate the evil with an abundant hate, and it is to their glory. But from the point of view of man, it is a great evil, for in relation to his small intellect, the power of desire would overcome him more than the measure and fitting relationship. And from there come forth all the despicable attributes that we mentioned above, seeking

luxuries, and love of physical pleasure. Man sinks and is drowned in the muck of the imaginary good, and he turns to pleasure, and sensuality or imagination becomes pleasing to him, while he rejects the true good that leads to success and to true wealth." Thus far his words. And it appears that by this means, all the doubts which the commentator mentioned in this section remained, as you will see in the following verses, God willing.

(11) PISHON: According to the opinion of Rashi, our teacher, Sa'adya Gaon, may his memory be blessed, and Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, it is the Nile, which descends from the Mountains of the Moon in the land of Cush, the plain which is called Ethiopia, which is in the continent of Africa, and from there it flows to the north of the world, and goes by the island of Meroe, where it divides into two branches, and goes around the island on either side, and again become one until it comes to Egypt, and it flows the entire length of the state to Alexandria, which is on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, which forms a partition between the continent of Europe and the continent of Africa which is called the *Mitteländisches Meer*, and there it divides into several streams and empties into this Mediterranean Sea.

HAVILAH: The Mikhlal Yofi [*editio princeps* 1660, by Solomon

ibn Melekh] wrote that it is called this on account of the future, for he is one of the sons of Eber, the son of Joktan [Gen. 10:29], and the name of the place is called by his name. And so also with Cush and Assyria, as Rashi, may his memory be blessed, wrote. And there is no doubt that in the days of Moses, there were famous countries which were called, in the same way, by the names of the men who built them.

WHERE THERE IS GOLD: It seems that it was nessecary to add an explanation and a distinguishing characteristic for the land of Havilah, which was not necessary with regad to the lands of Cush and Assyria, since there were two men whose names were Havilah, one is the son of Cush, the son of Ham [Gen. 10:6], and the second is Joktan the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, the son of Arpachshad, the son of Shem [Gen. 10:21-29]. And both of these men called their land by their name. And thus wrote Nachmanides, "'...where there is gold...' this is to explain that it is not the Havilah of Egypt, concerning which it is said, '...they dwelt from Havilah to Shur...' (Gen. 25:18) for this one is in the extreme east." Thus far his words. (For research on the place of the rivers, and the site of the garden of Eden, which is related to this, see the final essay, which I plan to compose at the end of the book, God willing.)<sup>45</sup>

(12) BDELLIUM: this was a precious stone, and they say that it is the round, white stone which they drill holes into, and make smaller stones from it to make a necklace, and, since they could not do any act or work from one stone of bdellium because of its smallness, they pierced it and joined stone to stone, like a thread, until a necklace has been made from them. Therefore, it does not say "bdellium stone" like it says "onyx stone," which is a large stone, and is also white and pure. And they made vessels for the use of the kings with it, and the names of the children of Israel were engraved upon it, because of its great importance and cleanliness above all inferior goods. And in German, this stone is called *Onyx Stein*.

(13) GIHON: this is not the small river which is near Jerusalem, for, behold, it is written that it "flows around the whole land of Cush," and this small river does not even pass through a part of it. And R. Joseph Kimchi [c. 1105-c. 1170] wrote that Gihon is the Nile River. And there are commentators who say that Pishon is the Ganges River, which is in the land of eastern India, under the rule of the great king who is called "*Mogul*," which empties into the sea, the Southern Ocean [Indian Ocean]. And Havilah is the name of an district there. And there are those who say that it is the Gozan River, which is mentioned in Kings and Chronicles,

where Senacherib exiled Israel. And, accordingly, Pishon is in the continent of Asia, and Gihon is in the continent of Africa, and see further in the portion *Noah*, the explanation of "the land of Cush." [see Gen. 10:6 under CUSH]

(14) HIDEQEL: they said that this is the Tigris River, which flows around the land of Armenia and Syria, as is the testimony of the Scripture, "which flows east of Assyria," and empties into the Euphrates River. And our sages, may their memory be blessed, interpreted that it is called Hideqel since its waters are sharp [*hadia*] and swift [*qali*]. [b. Ber. 59b] And likewise the authors said that its waters flow with a strong current, and it is also in the continent of Asia.

EUPHRATES: This is the river which is known by this name, and flows through Babylonia and empties into a bay of one sea that is in the east of the kingdom of Yemen, which comes out of the Southern [Indian] Ocean, and separates the land of Arabia from the land of eastern Persia. And this sea is called, in the language of the people, *Sinus Persicus*, and it is also in the continent of Asia.

(15) TO TILL IT AND KEEP IT: the two *hes* have a *ḥapiq*, which is the suffix of the feminine, and it means the ground upon which the garden was planted, or it speaks in the feminine about the garden, even though it is masculine, and the

plural from it is *ganiz*. Behold, *ganah* is also found, with the feminine ending *he*, "...and as a garden [*ganah*] causes what is sown in it to spring up...." (Isa. 61:11) and the plural, "Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens [*ganot*]..." (ibid. 66:17)

(16) AND [THE LORD GOD] COMMANDED: The word of commanding, with 'al is a negative commandment, in German, *verbieten*. And without the word 'al, it is a positive commandment, *gebieten, befehlen*.

YOU MAY FREELY EAT: you are permitted and allowed to eat.

(17) FROM...YOU SHALL NOT EAT: it says "from it [*mienu*]" after it says "from the tree [*etst*]" as an additional explanation. And thus, "...when she opened it and saw the child..." (Ex. 2:6) Or, the meaning of *mienu* is that which comes forth from it, which is the fruit, or its meaning is "even a little of it."

FOR IN THE DAY THAT YOU EAT ETC.: "At the time that you eat it, you will become mortal. And it is like, '...know for certain that on the day you go forth and go to any place whatever, you shall die...' (1Kgs. 2:42) The meaning is not that he [Shimei] would die immediately, on that very day, and the meaning is not about his knowledge alone, but the meaning is that at the time that he goes forth [from Jerusalem], the king may impose the death penalty, and he

will kill him when he wishes, and '...they shall go in to look upon the holy things, lest they die...' [Num. 4:20] and '...they will not bear a sin for it and die thereby...' [Lev. 22:9] Their intent is only that they will be guilty of a capital crime, and will die because of their sin [and not be put to death immediately]. And according to the opinion of natural scientists, man was intended to die from the beginning of creation, since he was a composite, but now, He decreed that if he should sin, he would die for his sin like those guilty of a capital crime from the hands of heaven for a transgression, like those [non-priests] who eat the Heave-offering, or [a priest] who drinks wine, or lacking [the proper priestly] garments, and others cases. There the intention is that they would die because of their sin, before their day had come. And therefore it says about the punishment, '...till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust and to dust you shall return...' [Gen. 3:19] according to your nature. And also, from the beginning, he would eat from the fruit of the tree and from the seed of the earth, if so, there was depletion from it, and he was subject to the cause of existence and destruction, and according to the opinion of our rabbis, if he had not sinned, he would never die, for the upper spirit gives eternal life, and the divine will which was in him at

the time of the creation, clings to him continually, and it sustains him forever, as I interpreted '...and God saw that it was good...' [Gen. 1:10] And know that the [fact that man is a] composite does not indicate destruction except for those of little faith...for the world is renewed by the divine will alone, and also the continuence is in it forever, as long as He wishes it. This is clear proof, therefore, that '...on the day you eat of it you shall die...', that then you will become mortal, and you will not last forever by my will. And from the beginning, eating [of the other fruit] was a pleasure for him. And it is possible that the fruits of the garden of Eden are absorbed into his limbs like manna, and sustain those who eat them. But when God decreed upon him that he would eat the plants of the field and by the sweat of his face he would eat bread from the ground, this food would become a source of destruction, for he was dust, and dust he would eat, and to dust he would return." Thus far the words of Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed. And that which he wrote, from the beginning, the eating was a pleasure, is very far removed, for the pleasure of eating also comes to man by the need of the body for food, because of the depletion. However, I do not know who compelled him to this. And it is possible that his food was supplied in the measure that it was depleted from him every

day, that the body would be sustained by this, and would last all the days. And perhaps, he intended this when he said "aborbed by the limbs."

(18) IT IS NOT GOOD THAT MAN SHOULD BE ALONE: The meaning is that it is not fitting for the purpose of creation for man to remain alone, without a helper, for man is political by nature, and he would not achieve succuss without help from those of his kind. And if he remained alone, the powers of soul and its attributes would not come forth from potentiality to action, and he would resemble the beasts of the earth, and it is possible that he would not reach their level. And also, the life of man, his sustenance, the health of his body and the preservation of his limbs; all is dependent upon help other than himself. And if so, it is not for the continuence of man to say about him that it is good if he is alone.

A HELPER FIT FOR HIM: it says this about woman since she helps man constantly and serves him. And the word *kenegdo* [fit for him] says, so to speak, that she will be before him, and opposite him always, to serve him. And the *kaf* is for the truth of the matter, like the *kaf* of "one day [*kehayom*]," (Gen. 39:11) "And the people complained [*kemit'oneni*]..." (Num. 11:1) And Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, wrote, and these are his words, "It is

possible to say that it was in accordance with words of the one who said, '[man was created with] two faces' [b. Ber. 61a] and they were made so that there should be in them an impulse causing the organs of generation to produce a generative force from male to female, or you may say 'seed,' in accordance with the well-known controversy concerning pregnancy [c.f. Nachmanides, Lev. 12:1], and the second face was a help to the first in its procreation. And the Holy One, praised be He, saw that it is good that the help stand facing him [*lenegdo*], and that he should see it and be separated from it, or joined to it at his will. This is why it says, 'I will make him a helper fit for him.'

(19) [GOD] FORMED ETC.: this forming [*yetsirah*] is the making [*'asiyah*] mentioned above, "...and God made the beasts of the earth..." [Gen. 1:25] However, it comes and interprets that the birds were created from the mire since it says above that they were created "from the water," and here it says that they were created from the ground, And furthermore, it teaches you here that at the time of their formation, he immediately brought them before Adam, to give them their names.

WHAT HE WOULD CALL THEM: what name he would give them.

AND WHATEVER NAME THE MAN CALLED EVERY LIVING CREATURE: its interpretation is that every living creature to which Adam

gave a name, that became its name. And thus, "...a place for burial [meqo sha qever]...", " (Ezek. 39:11) like, "a place there for burial [meqo qever sha]," and many similar cases. And thus the translator rendered it in German, and interpreted that it is the name that is fitting for it according to its nature. And the opinion of Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, is that the giving of the names is connected to the matter of the helper which he mentioned. And the meaning is that the Holy One, praised be He, brought all the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky before Adam, and he recognized their nature, and gave them names. That is to say, the name that was fitting to them according to their nature. And with the names, it became clear which was to be a help to its fellow, that is to say, the one that is fit to give birth one from the other, for the essence of the calling of the names was by the differentiation of the species. And God brought them before him, male and female, so that he would understand, according to their nature, which of them would be a help to the other in procreation, so that man would know that there was no helper for him among the creatures, and that he would long to have a helper like them. And behold, the soul of man is a living soul, as it says, "...and ,an became a living being..." [Gen. 2:7] And this is the meaning of "...and

whatever the man called every living creature....," that is to say, every species to which man gave a name, and said that it was a living being like him, that would be his name, and he would be a helper for him. And he called them all, and did not find a helper that he could call a "living soul" like himself.

(20) TO ALL THE CATTLE AND TO THE BIRDS OF THE AIR: the word "to all [lekhol]" applies to itself and to another with it, for the meaning is "and to *all* the birds of the air," and there are many similar cases.

BUT FOR THE MAN: that is to say, for himself. The name is used instead of the pronoun, for thus is the rule of the Holy Tongue, like the way of "...you wives of Lamech...," (Gen. 4:23) "...and Jephtha and Samuel..." (1Sam. 12:11) And the opinion of Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, is that this is not necessary, and the intention of the use of the name Adam is that he did not find a helper fit to be called by his name, that he could procreate from him, for the calling of the names signifies the division of the species and the separation of their powers from each other, he explained before. Now, it does not mean that it was in Adam's power to find a help for himself among them, for they were created with their natures [different than man], but if he was to find satisfaction with one of the species, he

would choose it for him, and the Holy One, praised be He, would adapt its nature to him, as He did with the rib, and it would not have been necessary for him to build a new structure. And God knew that he would not find a help to fit his nature except in this new structure.

WAS NOT FOUND A HELPER FIT FOR HIM: and God caused [a sleep] to fall etc. The words of our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, in Genesis Rabbah, "...when He brought them before him, male and female from each and every species, he said, 'all of them have a mate, and I have no mate,' immediately '[God] caused to fall...'"

(21) AND [GOD] CAUSED TO FALL [MAYAPEL]: from the additional heavy conjugation [pi'eil], like in "...Abram drove [mayashev] them away..." (Gen. 15:11)

DEEP SLEEP: this is a heavy sleep, and "deep sleep [tardemah]" is heavier than "sleep [sheinah]," and "sleep" is heavier than "light sleep [tenumah]." And the *tan* [of *tardemah*] is additional [i.e. a preformative].

ONE OF HIS RIBS: there were two ribs, as is the meaning of "...as for the second side of the tabernacle..." (Ex. 26:20) and the word "rib [tsela']" is feminine, and the meaning is "side." And this is what our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, meant when they said that two faces were created. And if so, it would have be proper to translate it

in German as "*eine von seinen Seiten*." However, Onkelos rendered it as "one of his ribs [*ḥada me'iyl'ohil*]," but "side of the tabernacle," he rendered as "side of the tabernacle [*ulistar mashkenal*]." And in Genesis Rabba, they said, "'[God] took one of his ribs,' R. Samuel b. Nahmani said 'one of his sides [*mesitrohil*], as you read, 'as for the second side of the tabernacle.' But Samuel said, '[one] rib.'" [Gen. Rab. 17:6] And thus it is translated in German, "*Ribbe*."<sup>66</sup>

ITS PLACE [*TAHTENAH*]: in its place [*biḥqoḡah*]. It is a singular form, and the *nun* is additional. "*Tahteyha*" is plural, and likewise "*tahtani*," and also "*tahti*." And in general, when the word "*taht*" is joined with the pronominal suffixes, it is found with the plural, [e.g.] "*tahtekhea*," "*tahtaw*," "*tahteha*," and according to the custom, it would proper for it to be "*tahteḥa*" here.

(22) INTO A WOMAN [*LE'ISHAH*]: to be a woman [*liheyot ishah*], like "And Gideon made an ephod [*le'efod*] of it..." (Jud. 9:27) to be an ephod.

(23) THIS [*ZOT*]: refers to the feminine, and it is found with a *alef* in place of the *waw*, as is the custom of the vowel letters [*alef, he, waw, yod*] to be changed, and the *taw* is for the feminine. And it is conceivable that it is in place of the *he* of the word "*zeh*," and since the *he* is not

quiescent in the middle of a word, it changes to an *alef*, which is articulated in the same place. And the meaning is, "this time I have found a helper for me, which I did not find until now among the rest of the species of living creatures, for she is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, and she is similar to me in form of the limbs, entirely, and therefore, it is fitting that she be called by my true name, for we will propagate together.

WOMAN [ISHAH]: according to the opinion of Ibn Ezra, the *dagesh* in the *shin* is in exchange for the quiescent *yod* of *ish*. And *ishah* is not spelled with a *yod*, so that it is not confused with *ishah* with the pronominal [מָפִיָּק] *he*, the meaning of which is "her husband." Sometimes the *מָפִיָּק he* is missing to make it weak, like "...and called it [lah] Nobah, after his own name," (Num. 32:42) and "...and the hair [se'arah] in it has not turned white..." (Lev. 13:4) and other like them. And thus wrote Qimḥi in [Sefer] *Hashorashim*, under the root *alef-yod-shin*. But under the root *alef-nun-shin* he wrote, "and it is possible that *ishah* [woman] is from this root, and the *dagesh* is for the missing *nun*, and it would be proper to be *inshah* [?], and thus the plural [construct] '...women [*ishot* instead of *neshey*] of lewdness...' (Ezek. 23:24) etc. But in the feminine plural the *alef* is missing, and they say *nashim*." Thus far his

words. And thus it appears to me.<sup>67</sup> And behold, *ishah* is in the pattern of *ḥiṭah* [wheat], the root of which is *ḥet-nun-ṭet*, as it is found in Aramaic "...measures of wheat [*ḥiṭin*]..." (Ezra 7:22) And the *he* of the two nouns is the sign of the feminine, and the word *ishah* is found in the construct in "...the wife of Noah [*eshet noah*]..." (Gen. 7:13) And sometimes it is found in the absolute "...like the untimely birth of a woman [*eshet*]..." (Ps. 58:9) "...a beautiful woman [*eshet*]..." (Deut. 21:11) Thus wrote Qimḥi there, and he said that it is found with a *tsere* instead of the *dagesh* to lighten it, but according to my opinion, this word is found in two patterns, *ishah* and *eshet*, and the root of both is *alef-nun-shin*, and the *dagesh* in *ishah* is for the missing *nun*, and in *eshet*, the *dagesh* is compensated by the *tserey* of the *alef*, for thus it is found sometimes even with letters that take a *dagesh*. And the plural of *ishah* is found as *nashi* (with the masculine ending, like *pilegesh* [concubine] is *pelagshi*) and not *ishi* in the pattern of *ḥiṭi* [wheat] from *ḥiṭah*. And thus it comes this way to separate it from *ESH* [fire], as is found in "...by fire [*ishey*] to the Lord..." (Deut. 18:1) from the absolute *ISHIM*. And it would be proper to be found as *anashi*, except that to keep the masculine and the feminine separate, the *alef* drops off, and it is conceivable that the plural *ISHOT*

which we found it is from *eshet* and the *dagesh* is found in its place replacing the *tsere*. And it is found in both the masculine and feminine plural form, like *dor* [generation], the plural of which is both *doria* and *dorat*, and thus it seems that, according to the opinion of Qimhi it is found in the absolute to lighten, and how much the more so that it is found in the plural to lighten (but according to my opinion, this is not done to lighten, and I have a reason for this, but this is not the place to expound it). And the construct is found from *eshet* as is the way of this pattern which is identical in the absolute and the construct. But from *ishah*, it would be proper to be *ISHAT*, with a *patah*, for it is the way of the *qamats* to change to its offspring *patah* in the construct, and not to a *segol*, as in *berakhah*, *tsedaqah* [which are, in the construct] *birkat* and *tsidqat*. And the pronominal endings are also found with *eshet* and not with *ishah*, with the proof of the *dagesh* in the *taw* [as in] *ishto* and *ishti*. But if it was from *ishah*, it would be proper to be *ISHATU* and *ISHATI*, with a *taw* without a *dagesh*, as in *birkhati* and *tsidqato*. And behold, in this pattern, the *tserey* of the *alef* changes to a *segol*, like *beheato* from *beheah* or to a short *hiriq*. And thus "Your wife [ESHTEKHA] will be like a fruitful vine..." (Ps. 128:3) And the *dagesh* of the *shin* is dropped with all the pronominal endings to

lighten, and also so the mobile *shwa*, as is its rule, will not be under a letter with a *dagesh*, and it must be a *tan* without a *dagesh*, but this is against the rule of the pattern, and furthermore, so that this word will be similar with all the pronouns, but with the word *eshtekha*, it is not possible to place *dagesh*, because of the impossibility of the two mobile *shwas*. And behold, according to our words above, *ish* and *isha* are two roots, and even though the verse says, "...she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man...", since the meaning is that they are only similar in pronunciation, and one word fits the other, and this is the name that it fitting for her.

BECAUSE SHE [LEZOT]: Ibn Ezra interpreted, "for this reason," like "...say of me..." (Gen. 20:13) And this is not necessary for the giving of a name in every place is with a *lamed*, in addition to the fact that according to his words this sentence is missing the *nif'al*, for when you say "for this reason the woman was called...", you have not made known who was called this, therefore the German translator translated this as referring to Eve ["*diese soll Männin heissen*," not "*gennant warden*"]. And thus Targum Onkelos wrote "this one shall be called women," and the repetition of the word is for the beauty and strengthening of the instruction.

THEREFORE A MAN LEAVES: the Holy Spirit says that in order to forbid unchastity to the sons of Noah (Sanhedrin 57a). And according to its simple meaning, these are the words of Moses. And "leaves" is not a commandment, that he must leave, but rather, it was customary and regular that he should leave, like "...thus Job did continuously..." (Job 1:5) And the meaning is that since the female of man was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, therefore it became part of the nature of man and his character in being a man, that he would leave the tent and the dwelling-places of his mother and father. (Onkelos translated it as "the house where his father and mother dwelled.") to which he had clung from the time of his coming forth from the womb. And he would cleave to his wife and see her as if she was one flesh with him, to love her, to rejoice in her happiness, and to be saddened by her sorrow, and he would not ever leave her. And the meaning is similar to "...for he is our brother, our own flesh..." [Gen. 37:27] which refers to his kin, and the relatives in the family are called "kin [*she'er beśarol*]." And behold, a man will leave his father and mothers kin and their nearness, and he will see that his wife is closer to him than them.

(25) NAKED [*'aruaia*]: plene spelling, with a *naw* and a *dagesh* in the *ea*, which is not customary after a long

vowel. And this is the rule, as long as the interpretation is "naked" in the absolute, the *resh* has a *ḥolam*; 'ARON. And the plural has a *shuruq* and a *dagesh* following it, even when the *shuruq* is plene spelling, and sometimes the absolute is 'EYRON, and the plural is 'EYRUNIM [likewise with a *dagesh* in the *ḥolam*], but whenever the meaning is "trickery," the *resh* has a *shuruq*, 'ARUM, and the plural has a *ḥolam* without a *dagesh*. And the mnemonic in the Masorah says "Clever is weak, naked is forced." (It means, with *dagesh*.)

WERE NOT ASHAMED: We already mentioned the matter of embarrassment to man from his nakedness, that there was no place for it at all when the sexual desire was in man according to his character and its fitting measure, before he broke the bounds and transgressed the law, which strengthened the power of his desire and added lust to lust, lust for the permitted upon lust for the advantageous. And for this reason, they were not ashamed, not he for her, nor she for him. And the word "were embarrassed [*hitboshashu*]" is from the doubled second radical which have a quiescent vowel hidden between them, and it is from the conjugation of the quadrilaterals, and the *shin* pointed with a *qamats* because it is the end of the verse [pausal].

3 (1) NOW THE SERPENT: Ibn Ezra mentions many different

opinions from the philosophizers of our people on the matter of the serpent, and its speaking and walking. But he said that in his opinion, "the meaning is literal, the serpent spoke and walked upright, and the One who endowed man with knowledge, endowed him, too. And behold, the verse testifies that he was more clever than all the beasts of the field, but not like man. The meaning of 'arum is wise, one who acts with cunning..." and trickery, and for the most part, he acts evilly.

DID GOD SAY [lit. EVEN GOD HAS SAID, *AF KI AMAR ELOHIM*]:  
 Sometimes, when the matter is understood from its context, the interrogative *he* is missing, or the [*he* of] surprise, and it is like "Did God say [*ha'af ki amar elohim*]..." And Onkelos translated it as "Did God truly [*bequshta*] say...", and thus the German translator translated [*Hat auch Gott wohl gesagt...*]. And behold, even though he saw them eating from the other kinds of fruit, he increased his arguments to her, so that she would respond to them, and he could come to talk about that tree. And it may be that the meaning of *af ki* is "how much the more so [*kol sheken*]." And the Scripture shortened his first words, for he said other things to the woman, and it is like he said to her that the Omnipresent hated you, even though you are greater than the rest of the creatures, since He did not make such and such an advantage

for you, how much the more so that He said to you that you should not eat of every tree of the garden, and from this you can see that He hates you. And this addition should not be a difficulty for you, for it is not possible, in any way, to interpret this without an addition, since it says *af*, and the word *af* always adds to that which it says [before]. And this is the custom of the Scripture in places like "And the spies said to Joshua, 'Truly [*ki*] the Lord has given the land into our hands..." (Josh. 2:24) And the word *ki* is not the beginning of the words [i.e. of the spies], but rather, the Scripture uses the ends of the words, and from their end, you will understand their beginning [what was said before, but not included in their words]. And there are those who interpreted it without an addition, and they say that its meaning is "even though God said that you may not eat from every tree of the garden lest you die, you will not die." And the woman entered into his conversation when he said to her "from every tree of the garden," and she said that this is not the case because "we may eat from the fruit of the trees of the garden etc." And then the serpent finished his words, for his intention was to say that "you will not die," and *af ki* is like "even though [*af 'al pi*]." GOD: the serpent did not mention the honored and awesome name [i.e. the Tetragramaton], since he did not know it. And

Onkelos also rendered the name of God here as "Lord," as in the first chapter.

(3) WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN: the word "the garden [*hagan*]" is marked with the accent *segolta*, and the point of the phrasing is thus: one thinks that "of the fruit [*ipri*]" is related to the verb of saying, and not to the warning, but the warning includes the eating and the touching [of the tree]. And the word "of it [*imenu*]" refers to the eating, and about the touching it says "it [*bo*]."

Behold, it is as if it said "and about the matter of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God warned us that we should not eat of it and should not touch it, and this is what the German translator intended [*Esst nicht von ihm (i.e. the tree) und rühst ihn (the tree) nicht an.*"].

NEITHER SHALL YOU TOUCH IT: she added to the commandment of God, and therefore she came to the point of diminishing for it says, "Do not add to his words..." (Prov. 30:6)

LEST YOU DIE: that you should not die.

(5) WHEN YOU EAT: the infinitive construct with the pronominal suffix, second person, masculine, plural.

YOUR EYES WILL BE OPENED: the meaning is not about an addition of understanding and knowledge of axioms, but rather "new forms and images will be introduced in you, and you will sense in yourselves a new sensation which you have

not experienced, like vision to a blind person when he opens his eyes.

LIKE GOD [KE'LOHIM]: Onkelos translated "like princes," and Jonathan translated "like great angels." And the matter is as we mentioned above, that a strong desire was born in them, similar in the level and the strength of its power to the desire of the angels

(6) SO WHEN THE WOMAN SAW: in her heart [with her mind].

TO THE EYES: with a *qamats* under the *lamed* to show that it is the definite article *he*.

TO MAKE ONE WISE: Onkelos translated it "to look at it."

(*Ihn zu betrachten*) And we found, in the Scripture, the root *sin-kaf-lamed* in the meaning of seeing and looking closely, as when our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, used it when they said, "...and consider [*histsakel*] three things..." [Abot 2:1, 3:1] It is written, "...the woman was of good understanding [*sekhel*]...", (1Sam. 23[:3]) its meaning is that she was of good concentration and glance, as if it said she was of good appearance. And likewise, "...find favor and good understanding...", (Prov. 3:4) that is to say, a good appearance. And "Happy is he who considers the poor..." (Ps. 41:2) he looks at him and deliberates about him. And Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, wrote "...she saw that it was good and sweet food. 'That it was a

delight to the eyes,' that by means of its fruit, one attains desire and goes about after his own eyes. 'And that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,' for by means of its fruit, one becomes wise to desire. Now she ascribed 'delight' to the eyes and 'desire' to the mind. The principal is [that by eating it], one can will and desire a thing or its opposite." Thus far his words. He follows this according to his way, that by means of the tree of knowledge, free will was added to man, to desire a thing or its opposite. And I have already informed you above [p. 143] that according to the opinion of the German translator, man was the possessor of free will even before the sin, rather, the tree caused the power of desire to grow very high in him, and by this, new feelings and different fantasies were produced in him, which he did not know before and had not experienced. And our eyes see a similarity [in this which causes us] to talk about those who drink wine. If they continue to drink wine, their power of desire will grow very much, and it will conquer the rule of the intellect and the understanding. And it seems to the man, as if he saw new images and heard pleasant voices. And he is persuaded by them to do a mindless act. And the same will happen to the man every time the power of desire within him grows, or the power of the intellect becomes weak, for by these two ways

the balance between these powers is upset.

(7) AND THEY KNEW THAT THEY WERE NAKED: even the blind person knows when he is naked, however now they felt in themselves the feeling of shame that men feel when they are naked, for a very strong desire entered them, as we said above. And sexual desire went beyond its bounds, and conquered them with the snare of sensual desire, with no stopping their imagination from wandering to and fro. And they began to be ashamed, he of her and she of him, for this is the meaning of shame. And desire [*he'edah*] and lust [*te'awah*] are synonyms, and the difference between them will be explained for you in another place, God willing.

LEAVES [*'ALEH*]: is written with a *he* instead of with the *yod* of the construct which shows the plural, and thus Targum Yonatan "fig leaves [*terafey*]," and it is translated the same way in German [*feigenblätter*].

(8) AND THEY HEARD ETC.: The words of Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, "The rabbis have said, in *Genesis Rabbah* [19:12], that R. Hilfi said that from here we may learn that a voice 'walks,' for it is said 'And they heard the sound [*qol*, voice] of the Lord God walking.' And so did the Rabbi write in the *Moreh Nevukhim*. And so is the opinion of R. Abraham [Ibn Ezra] that 'walking' refers to 'the voice,' as is the meaning of '...she makes a sound [*qolah*] like a

serpent gliding away...' (Jer. 46:22) And [Ibn Ezra] further says that the meaning of 'in the cool of the day' is that they heard the voice toward evening. And he mentioned in the name of R. Yonah [Ibn Janah, first half of 11th cent.] that the meaning of the verse is 'and man was walking in the garden toward the cool of the day.' [as opposed to God walking in the cool of the day] In my opinion, the sense of 'walking in the garden [of Eden: Nachmanides]' is similar to that of the verses 'And I will walk among you...', (Lev. 26:12) 'And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham...', (Gen. 18:33) and 'I will return again to my place.' (Hosea 5:15) All these verses indicate a revelation of the Divine Presence in that place or the departure from the place wherein it was revealed. (And it seems that the *hitpa'el* shows revelation [of the divine presence] and the *qal* shows [its] departure.) The sense of the expression 'in the cool of the day' is that with the revelation of the Divine Presence comes a great and strong wind, even as it says, 'And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord...' (1KGS. 19:11) Similarly we find '...he came swiftly upon the wings of the wind...', (Ps. 18:11) and of Job, it is written, 'Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind...' (Job 38:1) Therefore

Scripture says here that 'they heard the voice of the Lord God' as the Divine Presence was revealed in the garden approaching them in the wind of the day, '...when the breath of the Lord blows upon it...', [Isa. 40:7] that is, in the garden, like the wind of ordinary days, not a great and strong wind and in the vision of other prophecies, in order that they [i.e. Adam and Eve] should not be frightened or terrified. Yet Scripture says that in spite of this they hid themselves on account of their nakedness." Thus far his words. And the German translator translated this verse in a way that agrees with all these commentators, without deciding between them, for it is possible that the verb *mit Halekh*, whose translation in German is *wandlend* [sic], refers to God, according to the opinion of Nachmanides, or to the voice, according to the opinion of Rashi and Ibn Ezra, or to Adam and his wife, according to the opinion of R. Yonah which Ibn Ezra mentioned.<sup>6B</sup> And the word "*ruah* [cool]" needs to be translated, according to the opinion of Nachmanides, as *nach dem Winde*. And the opinion of Rashi, may his memory be blessed, "In that direction [*ruah*] towards which the sun comes, and that is the west, for towards evening, the sun is in the west..." And it appears that according to the placing of the accents, that the words 'cool of the day' are related to 'and they heard,' that is,

that they heard, in the cool of the day, the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden, since the word *bagan* [in the garden] has a greater pausal accent than all the accents before it.

**HID THEMSELVES:** this is found in the singular about the man and his wife, as we said above, when the verb precedes the subject, it is not necessary to preserve the [grammatical] number. And according to the opinion of the grammarians, this word, and those that are similar to it, affects itself and that which is after it, and it means that the man hid himself and his wife hid herself. And the verb affects that which is attached to it in general (whether it comes first or last), like "And Esther the queen etc...and Moredecai the Jew gave full written authority [*vatikhtov*, fem. sing.]..." (Est. 9:29) And the Masoretes agree with this, as I wrote in the introduction.

**TREES OF THE GARDEN:** "tree" is the name of the general species which includes many representatives, and therefore it is translated in German as *Bäume*.

(9) **WHERE ARE YOU:** "He knew where he was, but He wanted to enjoin him in a discussion, so that he might not fear to answer lest He punish him suddenly. (*Genesis Rabbah*, [19:11]). And likewise with Cain, he said, 'Where is Abel your brother...' (Gen. 4:9), and thus with Balaam. '...Who

are these men with you...,' (Num. 22:9) in order to enjoin him in discussion, and similarly with Hezekiah [Isa. 39:3] in regard to the messengers of Merodach Baladan." (Rashi)

(11) WHO TOLD YOU: "From where did you get the knowledge of what embarrassment there is in being naked?" (Rashi)

OF THE TREE [HAMIN HA'ETS]: the *he* is like the *he* of "...Have you killed [*haratsahta*] and also taken possession..." ([1]Kgs. 21:19) And the question here is not for the purpose of hearing an answer, for the matter was known by God, rather, that is the rule of the language [i.e. a rhetorical question].

NOT [LEVILTI]: with a *lamed* the meaning is "that not" and without the *lamed*, the meaning is "but" or "only."

EAT FROM IT [AKHOL MINENU]: it is an infinitive absolute in the pattern of PE'OL, and because of the *maqef* the *holam* is changes to the *qamats ha'uf* of its source.

(12) THE WOMAN WHOM THOU GAVEST TO BE WITH ME: "The meaning is 'the woman whom You, in your grace, gave to me to be a helper, she is the one who gave to me from the tree, and I thought that everything that she said to me would be a help and a benefit.' And that is why He said, in His punishment, 'because you have listened to the voice of your wife...' [Gen. 3:17] meaning that it was not fitting for you to transgress my commandment because of her advice. And our

rabbis, may their memory be blessed, have called Adam 'ungrateful' for this remark (Abod. Zar. 5b) by this they mean to explain that the sense of his [Adam's] answer was: 'You caused me this stumbling for you gave me a woman as a help, and she advised me to do evil.'" (Nachmanides)

AND I ATE [NA'OKHEL]: The *alef* is the sign of the speaker, and the weak vowel that disappears after it is in place of the *alef* of the root. And it [the *naw*] has a *qabats qatan* because it is in pausal, and it is impossible for a *naw* [to be pointed] with a *qabats* with a verb, since it is always pointed with a *shwa*.

(13) THIS [ZOT]: the feminine pronoun in place of the noun. And this is the way of the Holy Tongue in every case, "Once [ahat] God has spoken; twice have I heard this...", (Ps. 62:12) "It is all one [ahat], therefore I say...", (Job. 9:22) "...less or more [qetanah or gedolah]...", (Num. 22:18) "...what does this mean [zot]...", (Ex. 13:14) "...he had wrought folly [nevalah]...", (Gen. 34:7) "...and his food is rich [beri'ah]..." (Hab. 1:16) And, in my opinion, this is similar, "...the sweeping away of moist [harawah] and dry [hatseme'ah] alike...", (Deut. 29:18) and in every instance it is found that the gender is not specified [even though a feminine form is used]. And in German the neuter is used, saying *eines, dieses, etwas kleines, grosses,*

*frevelhaftes, fettes*, or the absolute noun, *ein Frevel*.

BEGUILED ME: mislead me, like "...do not let Hezekiah deceive you..." (2Kgs. 18:29, Isa. 36:14) And there are those who interpret it as meaning persuasion and enticing.

(14) UPON YOUR BELLY: its translation is "on your stomach [*ae'akh*], as if to say that you will walk lying on the ground, on you stomach [*bitnekha*], and it is similar to what our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said "If your wife is short, bend down and hear her whisper," [b. B. Mets. 59a] that is, lower yourself to her, and take counsel from her.

ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE: all the days that the species of serpent is upon the earth.

(15) HE SHALL BRUISE [*YESHUFKHA*] YOUR HEAD: meaning strike or beat, and its root is *shin-naw-peh*, like "...and I beat [*wa'ekot*] it...", (Deut 9:21) and Onkelos' translation is "...and I crushed [*weshafit*] it..." And likewise, "For he crushes me [*yeshufeni*] with a tempest..." (Job. 9:17) And the meaning is "her seed [Eve's] will strike him on the head." And the *bet* [i.e. the preposition] is missing like the *bet* of "...that was found in the house [*bet*, not *bevet*] of the Lord..." (2Kgs. 12:11)

AND YOU SHALL BRUISE HIS HEEL: that is to say, man will have a preponderance of animosity toward you, for he will strike your head, and you will only strike him in the his heel,

while he will crush your head. And in this, Onkelos went far from the simple meaning, which is not his way in every case.<sup>67</sup>

(16) GREATLY: this is the infinitive, and when the infinitive is followed by the verb, it stresses the matter. IN CHILDBIRTH [MEHERONEKH]: a noun whose root is *he-resh-he*, and the absolute is *HERON*. And the vowel of the *he* does not change with the pronominal suffixes, even though it is its way to change to a *shwa*, perhaps because it is from the pattern of those marked with a *dagesh*, and the *tsere* of the *he* is in place of the *dagesh* which should properly be found in the *resh*.

YET YOUR DESIRE SHALL BE FOR YOUR HUSBAND: you will long and lust for your husband, and you will not fear the suffering and pain of pregnancy and childbirth, and he will rule you like a lord, and despite this, you will desire him.

(17) BECAUSE OF YOU: so that suffering and injury will happen to him.

YOU SHALL EAT OF IT: you shall eat its produce. And this is a short way [of saying it], and likewise "...among those who eat at your table..." (1Kgs. 2:7)

(18) THORNS [MEQOTS] AND THISTLES [NEDARDAR] IT SHALL BRING FORTH FOR YOU: The words of Rashi, "the ground, when you shall plant it, shall bring forth thorns and thistles,

artichokes [*qondas*] and cardoons [*'aqaviyot*]; they can be eaten only by preparation. (Betsah 34a)" Thus far his words. And in Genesis Rabbah [20:10], they said "...*qots* is cardoon, while *dardar* is artichoke [*qondas*], so called because it consists of rows [*dari*] above rows." And the author of the *Arukh* interpreted that *qondas* in the vernacular is cardoon (*Disteln*). And there are those who say that *'aqaviyot* are *Tamarisken* in the vernacular. And in the *Arukh*, he wrote that it is *rosa* in the vernacular (*Mausdorn*). These are vegetables that are not fit to eat as they are, because they are bitter, and they must be prepared by fire in boiling water.

AND YOU SHALL EAT THE PLANTS OF THE FIELD: The words of Rashi, "What sort of curse is this. Was it not told to him as a blessing, 'Behold I have given you every plant yielding seed etc...' [Gen. 1:29] But what is said here refers to the beginning of the sentence, 'cursed is the ground because of you, in toil you shall eat of it,' and after all the toil, 'thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you.' When you plant it with legumes or with vegetables of the garden, it will bring forth thorns and thistles for you, and you shall eat them of necessity." Thus far his words. And the opinion of Nachmanides, that we mentioned above, is that before the curse, man only ate the seeds, and the plants were food for

the cattle and the beasts. But after the curse, it was necessary to eat the plants.

(19) IN THE SWEAT OF YOUR FACE: after he had taken great pains with it, to winnow, grind, knead, and bake; and it is not like the food of the cattle, as our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, mentioned that Adam exerted himself greatly. And the meaning of *beze'at* [in the sweat] is known from the words of our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, and it is in the pattern of *SHENAH* [sleep], *'etsah* [advise]. And its root is *yod-zayin-'ayin*, and it is like "...they shall not gird themselves with anything which causes sweat [*bayaza'*]...", (Ezek. 44:18) which means "until they begin to sweat." And in the construct, it does not change to a *shwa* as *shenat* and *atsat* change, because of the *'ayin*, which does not accept a shortened vowel before it.

YOUR FACE [*APEKHA*]: this is the face [*pani*]. And Scripture refers to the face as *api* [nose] because the nose is raised above the face.

TILL YOU RETURN TO THE GROUND: outside of the garden of Eden, for from there he was taken, as it will explain, that God drove them out of the garden of Eden to work the ground which he took from there. And behold, He decreed death for him in this world, that his body would return to the dust from which it was created, and he would only live the

eternal life after the soul was separated from the body. And the meaning of the curse for man is that before he ate from the Tree of Knowledge, God brought him from the ground from which he was created, and placed him in the garden of Eden, to care for the garden, and to guard it with little toil, in peace and quiet. And it is conceivable that he would live forever, and that the body would only be destroyed by eating of the fruit of the garden, it would change little by little, until it became as pure as the celestial beings. However, now, after his eating from the Tree of Knowledge, and his desire conquered him. There is no good for man, but only travail and sorrow and trouble working the cursed ground. Since, if he dwells in peace and eats and is satisfied and becomes fat, his heart will turn from the good path, and he will follow after his eyes and go whoring after them. And he will distance himself from the hoped-for richness. And, therefore, it is a great favor for man that he will enjoy the work of his hand, and will eat his bread in the sweat of his face and with great travail. And since this is the case, it is impossible for him to live eternally while having this quality. And if he lived a thousand years he would only see toil and striving after the wind [cf. Goh. 1:14]. And if so, God acted kindly toward him, that his body should return to its dust, at the time meted out for him by

his Creator, may He be praised, and the soul will return to God, to behold the goodness of God in the land of the living. And, therefore, this curse is itself grace and pity from the One who is gracious, the Benefactor, may He be blessed, as it is His way only to punish for the good of the sinner, so that it will be good for him in the end. And the punishment which comes from Him, may He be exalted, is not revenge and absolute evil, as our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said "Whatever the All-merciful does is all for good." [Ber. 60b, Ta'an 21a]

(29) EVE [*HAMAH*]: a *naw* in place of the *yod*, since it is their custom to change one for the other, like "Behold, the hand of the Lord is upon [*hoyah*]..." (Ex. 9:3) and "What has [*howeh*] a man..." (Qoh. 2:22) And he did not call her *Hayah*, to separate her from the beasts of the field.

MOTHER OF ALL LIVING: of men.

(21) GARMENTS OF SKIN: they were of skin, and there are those who interpret "for their skin."

(22) THEN THE LORD GOD SAID ETC: Oneklos translated "behold the man has become unique in the world because of it, knowing good and evil." And this is the opinion of Rashi, and it is in Genesis Rabbah. R. Elijah Mizrahi [c. 1450-c. 1526] wrote that the word 'of us [*misenu*]' is immediately connected to 'knowing good and evil,' as if to say, 'of us

and of himself he knows the good and the evil, but it not affect his freedom of action, as the Tannaite said, 'freedom is given.' [Avot. 3:19]" See there. And Ibn Ezra remarked as if he meant the Onkelos translation. And these are his words, "When *eḥad* [one] is vocalized with a *pataḥ qatan* (a *segol* under the *alef*), it has a disjunctive accent, and it is in the absolute state. When it is has a full *pataḥ* (under the *alef*) it is in the construct, as in: '...As one [*ke'ahat*] of the tribes of Israel...' (Gen. 48:16) Therefore, it is impossible for it to have the same meaning as *eḥad*. What meaning could it have, then, unless the accent connected *miḥenu* [of us] with *lada'at* [knowing]." Thus far his words. And in my opinion, the grammar of the words *EḤAD* and *AḤAD* is similar, since the principal of the pattern is *EḤAD*, which is a number, and is joined to the modified word. And it would be proper to be *AḤĀD*, in the meter of *GANĀV* and *SHABĀT* (for with a *ḥet*, the dagesh is not compensated), except that a *pataḥ* never comes before a guttural letter with a *qamats*. Therefore it changes to a *segol*. And its essence is to be absolute with a disjunctive accent, and there should not be any word or words after it that belong with it. But *AḤAD* is generally joined to the word or words that are after it (And not like the meaning of the construct which the grammarians mentioned, which shows possession, for

it is also found with a *se* after it, and that which shows possession is not joined with a *se*, only the meaning that is found in the middle of the sentence, and the word or words that come after it are an explanation of it, and this is also the intention of Ibn Ezra, when he said that it was a construct.) and therefore the *qamats* changes to a *patah*, and then the first *patah* returns to its place, like "...the live [HEHAI] goat..." (Lev. 16:20). And since *AHAD* comes in the middle of the sentence, where it appears like a construct, therefore, it is never found with the definite article, but it is found with the word *EHAD*, (and rarely, we have also found the word *EHAD* in the middle of the sentence, and *AHAD* at the end of the sentence). And behold, in my opinion, neither *EHAD* or *AHAD* in themselves reveal any clear or specific thing, except that *EHAD* is found with the definite article *he*, and *AHAD* is joined to some word or words which explain it. But there is a difference between them, for *EHAD* with the definite article *he* shows the specific one that was desired by the speaker, whereas *AHAD*, which is joined to the words after it does not show one specific thing, but rather one of the totality that is described after it, to remove those that are not included in the words after it. And if there were not words after it explaining it, the intention of the speaker would not be

known what kind or type of *aḥad/ehad* he meant. The example of this is "...one [*AḤAD*] of the people might easily have lain with your wife..." (Gen. 26:10) If it had said "...one [*EḤAD*] might have lain with your wife..." the meaning would not have been about his people specifically (even though it would have been understood from the context, but this meaning is not included in the sentence). And if it said "...the one of the people might have lain with your wife (or the one [might have lain] with your wife)..." the meaning would have been about a specific one, who is the king. But, when it said "...one of the people might have lain..." behold, the people is with the definite article [*ha'aḥad*], which shows that it is the people specifically (*AḤAD* joined to *ha'aḥad* is one of them specifically, and not from another people[]), but whoever it may be from them (as we explained there). And behold, in the verse which is before us, if it were said "like one [*KA'EḤAD*] of us (for the *qamats* of the *kaf* shows the definite article), it would show a specific one, who is God, praised be He. But *KE'AḤAD* shows any specific one, and the word[s] "of us" come to explain the meaning of one of the angels on high, to whom God spoke. But which of the angels is not explained. And it would be whoever it would be (and see further what is written in section *Toledot* about "one of the people" which was

mentioned above). And they disagreed about this in *Genesis Rabbah*, see there [21:5]. And the meaning, according to our way, is that God said, "Behold the power of desire in man has risen to the level of the angels on high, and by this he destroyed the equal relation between the powers of the soul, and he is apt to fall into the pit of fantasy, and would turn to arrogance and imaginary desires. But now that he has this quality, if he remained in the garden of Eden, he would have free will to do what was good in his eyes, lest he put forth his hand and take from the Tree of Life also, and eat and live forever. And by this the meaning of the creation in general is ruined, for he will not achieve the eternal richness and good which is hoped for all the days. But the eternal life in this world has no good or advantage for man, since he destroyed his way on the earth, and it is good that he was deprived of the Tree of Life, so that his body could return to the dust as it was.

And the grammar of the word *shenu* is as follows. Sometimes it refers to the third person masculine singular, and the second *she* receives a *dagesh* for the missing *nun* of *shin*. And the *dagesh* of the *nun* does not show anything. And it would be proper to be *shenuh*, like "...the whisper of it [*shenuh*]..." (Job 4:12) And there the *nun* is weak, because of the compensation of the short vowel which is under the *she*,

with the quiescent *shwa* of the *nun*. And when the speaker wishes to be lighter, and leave out the *he*, he places the *shuruq* after the *nun*, and *nun* must take a *dagesh* to compensate for the short vowel that precedes it. And it is similar with the pronominal suffixes of the verbs, *YISHMERENU* with a *dagesh*, *YISHMERENHU* without a *dagesh*. Sometimes it shows a suffix of those that speak about themselves, as in "...none of us [*nienu*] will [withhold from you] his sepulchre..." And it would be proper for the *nun* to be weak, and for a *tsere* to precede it, *MINENU*, like in the pronominal suffix of *YISHMERĒNU*, and this is how the men of the east read it (in the tradition, they are called "the Easterners [*medinḥa'ey*]"), but the men of the west (Westerners [*ma'ariva'ey*] in the tradition), to whose pronunciation we are accustomed, read it as a *segol*.

AND LIVE: a past which is changed to a future. And it would be proper for the *naw* to have a *shwa*, except that this is the rule of the conjunctive *naw* when it joins two separate words, and the accent is on the letter that is after the *naw*. If there was no word after it with a conjunctive *naw*, for the conversive *naw* can also serve as a conjunctive. And its meaning is "and he will live." And the root is *ḥet-yod-yod*, according to my opinion, as is the opinion of Qimhi in [*Sefer*] *Hashorashim*, under the root *ḥet-yod-yod*,

but not like Ibn Ezra. And I have already expounded on this in the pamphlet '*Ali» Litrafah* which has already been published, on the verse "...but if it is a daughter, she shall live..." (Ex. 1:16) See there.

(23) SENT HIM FORTH: every "sending" which is followed by a *»e»* has the meaning of expulsion, and it has meaning of disgrace, as in "...send them out of [*shalah »e'al*] my sight..." (Jer. 15:1)

TO TILL THE GROUND ETC.: so that he would be busy working the ground, and he would not turn his heart to *»eject* it and go in the path of the unruly.

(24) HE DROVE OUT ADAM: its meaning is "when he drove Adam out, he placed etc...", and thus it is translated in German [*Er vertrieb also den Adam und lagarte...*].

AT THE EAST OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN: "in the east of the garden of Eden, outside the garden" (the words of Rashi) and this is the opinion of the one who said that the garden of Eden is in the west, and the man was driven out to the east, and the cherubim were between the man and the garden. However, if the garden was in the east, "at the east of the garden of Eden" must be interpreted according to its [Aramaic] translation "*»ileqad»in leginta*," in front of the garden of Eden, before one enters it.

THE CHERUBIM: angels of destruction.

SWORD WHICH TURNED EVERY WAY: (Rashi) "It had a flame to frighten him from re-entering the garden. The Targum renders *Iahat* [flaming] as "*shenan* [blade]," like "he drew his blade [*shenana*]," Sanhedrin [82a] and in Old French, it is *lame* [?]. And in German, it is *Klinge*. And the sword is called this because when it is turning it is similar to a flame, as in "...flashing sword and glittering spear...". (Nahum 3:3)

4 (1) NOW ADAM NEW [MEHA'ADAM YADA']: "This was already before the matter above, before he sinned and was driven out of the garden of Eden, and similarly the conception and childbearing. For if it had written *wayada' ha'adam* (according to the way of Scripture in its stories to have the verb precede the actor), it might have meant that he had children after he was banished." (Rashi) And thus the German translator translated it [*Adam hatte seiner Frau Chavah beigewohnt*].

KNEW: its first meaning is about the entering and setting of the form of things in the imagening soul (*gewahrwerden, sich bewusst sein*), whether it is a sensual image (*empfinden, fühlen*), or an intellectual image (*erkennen, einsehen*). And the meaning was transferred to describe love of and care for a thing (*lieben, versorgen*), since the one who loves always keeps the picture and image of the beloved in his heart and

before his eyes, and likewise the one who cares, his eyes and heart are always upon the thing for which he cares. And this is like the meaning of "...for the Lord knows [yode'a'] the ways of the righteous...", (Ps. 1:6) "...what is man that thou dost regard him [weteda'ehu]..." And it is used for sexual intercourse; "...every woman who has known [yoda'at] man...", (Num. 31:17) for through the image of the woman who is loved, which is kept in the soul of the man who loves, the desire to cleave to her (*beinohnen*) is aroused, and thus it is translated in German. [see above]

CAIN [QAYIN]: because of *qaniti* ["...I have acquired..."].

I HAVE ACQUIRED: there is "acquisition [*qinyan*]" which is without selling and without money, like this and those that are similar to it, as it is translated in German, *erwerben*.

WITH THE HELP OF THE LORD [ET YHWH]: like from [we'et] God, and thus in Targum Onkelos, "from before God." And behold, in this chapter, it begins to mention the special name [of God, *Yhwh*] without combining with the name "God [*elohim*]." And it is conceivable that this is because it mentions the sacrifice of men, that they sacrificed an offering to the Lord. It is like the meaning of what Ben Azai said (in *Menahot*, chapter *Hare Alay Isaron* [110a]) "Come and see what is written in the chapter of the sacrifices. Neither *el* or *elohim* is found there, but only the Lord [YHWH], so as not

to give litigants any occasion to differ." And it is possible that even Eve intended this worthy meaning in the giving of the name to her son. And the meaning of the verse is, "And she bore a son and called his name Cain, for she said, 'I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord.'" And thus, like, "...and she bore Enoch..." (Gen. 4:17) and there are many similar cases in this portion and in other places.

(2) A KEEPER OF SHEEP [TSON]: It is possible that even though flesh was not permitted to them, in any case, the milk, the fleece, and the skin<sup>70</sup> were not forbidden for the needs of men, since it was not necessary to kill a creature for these. And *tson* is the name of the kind of small cattle which includes sheep and goats, as it is translated in German, and in other places, it is translated *kleines Vieh*. A TILLER OF THE GROUND: for man has a great need for the ground, and it is necessary for him to be occupied with it constantly, he is [related] to it like a slave to his master.

(3) OFFERING [MINḤAH]: its root is *me-nun-ḥet*. And the proof is [for this is found in] that which they were accustomed to call it in the Mishna, *menaḥot*, with a *shwa* under the *me*, like from SHIFḤAH and SIMLAH, SHEFAḤOT and SENALOT are said, with a *shwa*. But if the root were

*nun-ḥet-he*, it would have been proper to be called \**MINHOT* in the language of our rabbis, like *MITSMOT*.

(4) AND OF THEIR FAT PORTIONS: according the opinion of the German translator, these are the parts of an animal, and it is like "...the fat of the lamb..." (Lev. 4:35) And there are those who say that it is an adjective describing fat flocks and cattle. And it is conceivable that the absolute state in the singular is *ḤĒLEU*, and not *ḤELEU* according to the opinion of Qimhi. And in spite of this it is a description of a fat animal, since [words] from the *PE'EL* pattern properly change, with the pronominal suffixes, to a *hiriq* or a *pataḥ*, and in the guttural letters it is always a *pataḥ*, like *ḥesed* and *ḥasdo*. This is not the case with the *PE'EL* pattern, with the guttural letters, it changes to a *segol*, like *ḥelqo* from *ḥeleq*. And here the *yod* of the plural is missing, but it remains in the pronunciation of the vowel, for since the *bet* is weak [i.e. spirant], in all the precise books, one is forced to say that it is from the absolute state *ḤALAVIN*, which then is found in the construct with the pronominal suffix. The *lamed* receives a mobile *shwa*, and the *bet* is weak, like "...*ḤELVEY hasheleim* [burnt offerings]..." (Lev. 6:5). But if it was from the absolute state *ḤELEU* of *ḤĒLEU*, the *bet* would have to receive a *dagesh*, like *ḤELBAM*, *ḤELBEHEN*, *ḤELBAMO*, where the *shwa* of

the *lamed* is quiescent, and the *bet* receives a *dagesh*.<sup>71</sup>  
 HAD REGARD [NAYISHA]: its meaning is "and he turned  
 [nayifen]," and it wishes to say "accepted," like "...do not  
 respect ['al tifen] their offering..." (Num. 16:15). And its  
 root is *shin-'Pyin-he*, and the *patah* is in place of the  
*segol*, to expand the guttural letter, like *NAYIHAR*.

(7) IF YOU DO WELL, WILL YOU NOT BE ACCEPTED?: the correct  
 one of the interpretations is "you will find favor [sé'et  
*pani*]," as opposed to where it says "...and his countenance  
 fell..." [Gen. 4:5] and "...why has your countenance  
 fallen..." [ibid. 4:6] And it is because of the anger and  
 shame that his offering was not accepted, "if you do well,  
 will you not be accepted?"

SIN IS CROUCHING AT THE DOOR: transgression is always  
 hunting your life to take it [cf. 1Sam. 24:11], and  
 perseveres in this, without stopping a moment, to cause you  
 to sin. And it is a pleasant metaphor, as if transgression  
 constantly dwells at the door of man, and guards the closed  
 door, to be on guard over it, until it finds a time to enter  
 there. And *rovets* [crouching] is found in the masculine,  
 about *ḥatat* [sin] which is feminine, since this crouching is  
 with great power like a lion on the prowl, and like a bear  
 bereaved of its cubs who yearns for a man to tear him apart,  
 if the man does not conquer it before it encounters him. And

we have found the use of the masculine for the feminine to show agility and great effort, like "...stand [*'aḥod*] at the door of the tent..." (Jud. 4:20) [said to Jael] and not *iḥdi*, and Rashi interpreted there, "Hasten yourself in the matter [*badavar*]," (It must say, "like a male [*kazakhar*]").<sup>72</sup> And the meaning of *rovets* is the long rest like cattle, at the time when it rests and lies down on its legs. And therefore the meaning of crouching is also applied to its falling under its burden, for its way is to fall on its legs.

IN ITS DESIRE [*TESHUQATO*]: meaning lust and longing. It wishes to say that sin always desires to cause you to sin, but you, if you wish, are able to master it, for the freedom is placed in your hands, And for this reason I said, that it is within your power to do well and to find favor, and your anger, and the falling of your countenance is only a result of the evil of the heart.

(8) CAIN SAID TO ABEL HIS BROTHER: and what he said to him is not explained, even though it is the way of the Holy Tongue to explain every speech as it is. And it is conceivable that he said, "Let us go out to the field," as it is written in Targum Jonathan, and thus it is in the Greek translation which is in our hands, which is attributed to the seventy Elders.

AGAINST [EL] ABEL HIS BROTHER: like upon ['aI], and thus "...he does not eat upon [eI] the mountains..." (Ezek. 18:6)

(9) WHERE [EY] IS ABEL YOUR BROTHER: This is the opening of a discussion, like when He said to Adam, "Where are you?" And it is the same as *ayeh*. And it is conceivable that the question is [asked] in amazement, like "What have you done?" [Gen 4:10]

(10) THE VOICE OF [YOUR BROTHER'S] BLOOD ETC: blood is sometimes said in the singular and sometimes in the plural, even about one man, like "...his blood [dama(y)w] is upon him..." (Lev. 20:9), and "is crying" goes with "blood" and not with "voice." And a word of "hearing" or "coming up" is missing, as if it said "came up before Me," or "I hear the voice of your brother's blood, which calls out to me," and this is the way of the metaphor.

(11) FROM THE GROUND: that a want and a curse come to him from the corner of the ground which he sows and plants, for he was a tiller of the ground. And the ground would no longer put forth fruit and a harvest. And he would have to go far away from the place of Adam, his father, which was close to the garden, and he would not find rest in one place, but rather he would wander. And therefore, the German translator translated "*von der Erde hinweg*."

WHICH HAS OPENED ITS MOUTH ETC.: "...means: "You have

spilled your brother's blood and covered his blood with earth, and I will decree upon you that it uncover your blood,<sup>73</sup> '...and the earth will disclose the blood shed upon her and she shall no more cover her slain...' [Isa. 26:21] for it will be punished together with all that is covered up in it, such as seed and plant." (Nachmanides)

(12) WHEN YOU TILL THE GROUND: for all that you take pains to till the earth with ploughing and hoeing, and with the work in the field, and you will seed it as is proper, it will not continue to give you its strength, as it had done up to now.

A FUGITIVE AND WANDER [NA' MANAD]: both of them are the opposite of rest, but it is possible for the one who moves his whole body to stay in one place, but the one who moves to and fro, wanders from place to place, in German, *unstet und flüchtig*. And likewise in Targum Onkelos, "exile and go into exile [*metaltel negale*]."

(13) MY PUNISHMENT [ANONI] IS GREATER THAN I CAN BEAR: this means, "my punishment [*'onshi*] is too great to bear and to endure," for the word transgression [*'anon*], and likewise sin [*ḥatat*], sometimes shows the punishment that comes as a result of the sin, and because of it. And thus "...no punishment [*'anon*] shall come upon you..." (1Sam. 28:10)  
 "For the chastisement of my people has been greater than the

punishment [ʿawon] of Sodom...," (Lam. 4:6) means that the evil that has come upon Israel because of its transgression is greater than the evil that came upon Sodom. "This shall be the punishment [ḥaṭat] to Egypt...," (Zech. 14:19) it means, the punishment [ʿonesh] of Egypt.

(14) AND FROM THY FACE I SHALL BE HIDDEN: that you shall no longer take care to guard me, for that is the "hiding of the face," as it is said, "...In that day...I will...hide my face..." (Deut. 31:18) And the meaning is the same whether God hides His face from the one cared for, or the man is hidden from the face of God.

AND I SHALL BE A FUGITIVE AND WANDERER ON THE EARTH ETC.: if you examine the placing of the accents closely, you will know that the meaning of the verse is "when I become a wanderer and fugitive on the earth, will not every one who finds me, kill me," as it is translated in German [*wenn ich nun unstet und flüchtig auf der Erde bin, so wird mich jeder umbringen, der mich findet*]. And the meaning is that I will be unable to build a house and fences for myself in any place because I am a wandering exile, and the beasts will kill me, for your shadow has departed from me. Thus he confessed that man is not guarded and kept away from injury by his own strength, but only by the watchfulness of the Supreme One over him. ([cf.] Nachmanides)

(15) IF ANYONE SLAYS CAIN: The words of Rashi are "This is one of the passages which abridge their expression, they only suggest, but do not explain; 'if anyone slays Cain' indicates a threat, 'thus will be done to him, such and such will be his punishment', and it does not specify his punishment...and similarly, 'And David said on that day: Whoever would smite the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft...', (2Sam. 5:8) and it does not explain what would be done for him. But the verse speaks only by suggestion, 'Whoever smites the Jebusites, and goes up the water shaft, and approaches the gate, and conquers it, and the blind etc.' and them too he shall strike, because the blind and the lame said, 'David shall not come into the House.' The one who smites these, I shall make him a chief and commander. Here [in Samuel] it abridges its words, but in Chronicles [1Chr. 11:6] it explains, "...he shall be chief and commander..."

VENGEANCE SHALL BE TAKEN ON HIM SEVENFOLD: The words of Qimhi in [*Sefer*] *Hashorashim*, under the root *shin-bet-'ayin*, "it means 'many vengeancees will be taken on the one who kills Cain.' It did not mean that exactly 'sevenfold vengeance' will be taken on him for both 'seven' masc. and 'seven' fem. are found about a final accounting which is not his reckoning, but more like '...sevenfold as many as your

sins...,' (Lev. 26:21) '...for a righteous man falls seven times and rises again...' (Prov. 24:16). It means 'many times.'" Thus far his words. And the words of Nachmanides, after he quotes the interpretations of the commentators, are [v. 23] "If so, Scripture is stating, 'Therefore, whoever slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on the seventh generation,' and not in his days. And this is the translation of Onkelos, 'All who would slay Cain: In seven generations, punishment will be exacted of him.' But if so, it would have been proper if the verse, 'Lamech said to his wives' [v. 23], appear before ['Adah bore Jabal,' v. 20]. In my opinion, the word 'sevenfold' does not mean 'seven generations' because this word is not used for seven separate units but rather for the multiplying of one thing seven times, such as: '...purified seven times...,' (Ps. 12:7) '...he will pay sevenfold...,' (Prov. 6:31) '...and the light of the sun will be sevenfold...,' (Isa. 30:26) meaning doubled and redoubled seven times. But the meaning of "if anyone slays Cain' is, according to its real sense, that God said, 'Therefore, whoever slays Cain will have vengeance taken on him sevenfold, for I will punish his slayer seven times for his sin, since I have promised Cain that he will not be slain in view of his fear for Me and his confession before Me.'" Thus far his words. And you will

understand from this the intention of the German translator [*Niemand wage es Kain umzubringen*], and there is further proof that it is not conceivable to interpret that it is one command about the killer, "the one who kills Cain will be punished many times," for the meaning of vengeance [*neqawah*] applies only to the one who is killed, or who suffers the violence which is done to him, and not to the one who does it, like "Cain will be avenged sevenfold," as before. And thus, "...he shall be punished [*naqaw yenaqaw*]..." (Ex. 21:20)

AND THE LORD PUT A MARK ON CAIN: "...it say 'God put' and not 'God gave Cain a sign,' which indicated that God gave him a steady sign which would always be with him. Perhaps it indicated that, as he wandered from place to place, he had a sign from God indicating the road which he should walk, and thus he knew that no misfortune would overtake him on that road." (Nachmanides [v. 13])

(16) FROM THE PRESENCE OF [*MI LIFNEY*] THE LORD: is found with a *ne* and a *lamed*. And the meaning is "from the place which is before the Lord," which is the garden and the ground which is near to it, which was the place of the Divine Presence, and the place for the receiving of prophecy.

IN THE LAND OF NOD: it is possible that it is called this because of "fugitive and wanderer [*na' wenad*]."

EAST OF EDEN: Here too Targum Onkelos renders it as meaning "before," not as meaning "eastern." He said, "which he had worked upon before the garden of Eden." And if the garden of Eden is in the west, we would be able to interpret it according to its simple meaning, as "east of the garden."

(18) AND TO IRAD WAS BORN: The words of Rashi, "There is a place in which it says, about the male, *holid*, and a place in which it says *yalad*, because the verb for birth has two meanings. The giving birth by woman, *naistre* in Old French (*naître*, in German, *gebären*), and the act of begetting offspring by the man, *engendrer* in Old French (*ensemeler*, or *ensemeler*, as it is in the manuscript of Rashi, and in German, it is *besamen*). When it says *holid* in the *hif'il* form, it is speaking of [the man causing] the giving birth by the woman, 'so-and-so caused his wife to give birth to a son or a daughter.' But when it says *yalad* [in the *qal*], it speaks only of the act of begetting by the man, which is, in Old French, *enirir* (*engendrer*, and in German, *hervorbringen* or *zeugen*)." Thus far his words.

(19) TWO: and thus the word "two [*shtayim*]" is from the root *shin-nun-he*, and the *taw* is added to mark the feminine. It would be proper if it were \**SHINTAYIM*, except that the *nun* drops [is assimilated], to make it easier, like the word "daughter [*bat*]," whose root is *bet-nun* with the *taw* of the

feminine (except that when it is found with the pronominal suffixes, the *nun* is compensated with a *dagesh* in the *taw*, like *BITO*, *BITI*). And Qimhi wrote in the *Mikhlol* [editio princeps, Constantinople, 1532] (small *dalet*[?]) 225b), "...and they pointed it the pattern of *shnayim*, and the *taw* remained with a *dagesh*, and the *dagesh* is *lene*, as in *BESHINTAYIM*, for a sign and a mark that this is its rule, for without this, the *taw* would be weak [i.e. spirant], according to the rule of all *BeGaD KeFaT* after a mobile *shwa*." Thus far his words. But according to the opinion of R. Zalman Hanau [1687-1746], the *taw* is weak in *shtayim*, that the *shwa* is mobile after the *hiriq* which is in place of the *shwa*. This is also the opinion of the author [Aaron Moses B. Zvi Hirsch] of *Ohel Moshe* [Zolkiew, 1765], because there it comes in place of the vowel which take the accent. And Ibn Ezra, in his *Sefer Tsahot*, wrote that the *dagesh* comes for the missing *nun*, but this too is incorrect, for a *dagesh lene* does not have the power to compensate for a missing letter. And we do not know the reason for this *dagesh*, and about the matter of the reading of the word, look in *Tiqun Soferim*.

(20) THE FATHER OF: "the first," and it is referred to by the word "father [*av*]." For thus the father is first, and precedes his son. Its root is *alef-bet-he*, and in construct

and with the pronominal suffixes, a *yod* is found in place of the *he* of the root.

WHO DWELL IN THE TENTS AND HAVE CATTLE: grazes the flock, or grazes with the flock, and from its context, you will understand what is missing [namely a verb to go with "cattle." He provides it in his translation: *viehtreiber*]. And behold, Abel was also a shepherd of the flock, but "...Jabal<sup>74</sup> was the first to pasture animals in uncultivated places. Dwelling in tents, a month here, and a month there, because of the [need for] fodder for his sheep, when the feed was consumed in this place, he went and pitched his tent in another place." (From the words of Rashi)

(21) LYRE AND THE PIPE: types of musical instruments, a great science [Mendelssohn translates them as *Harfe* 'harp' and *Zither* 'zither.'].

(22) FORGER [LOTESH]: sharpener, and it is like, "...but let everyone sharpen [*liltosh*] his ploughshare..." (1Sam. 13:20) TOOLS [HORESH]: it is conceivable to be there in the pattern of "...and the rest [*hayoter*] we have utterly destroyed..." (1Sam. 15:15) (i.e. the pattern of the active participle) that is to say, he sharpens all the tool of copper and iron, and thus it is translated in German [*welcher...Merkzeug...zu machen verstand*].

THE SISTER OF TUBAL-CAIN WAS NA'AMAH: as if it said, "a sister was born to him, and her name was Na'amah." And thus, "...and Lotan's sister was Timna...", (Gen 36:22) "...and Miriam their sister...", (Num. 26:29) "...and the name of his sister was Ma'acah..." (1Chr. 7:15) And there is a homily of our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, "...that she was the very beautiful woman in whom the sons of God erred. This is hinted in the verse, '...the sons of God saw that the daughters of men...', (Gen. 6:2) As mentioned in the *Pirque Derabi Eliezer* [ch. 22]. But other sources have it that Na'amah was the wife of Shamdon, the mother of Ashmedai, and it is from her that the demons were born, for her name is indeed found in the writings of 'the use of the demons.' Scripture hints and deals briefly with such hidden matters." (From the words of Nachmanides) And a hint of this remains in the idols of the nations, and the poems of the Greeks, who called the demon or the god who rules over copper and iron smiths "Vulcan," who is close to Tubal-Cain, and the name of his sister and wife is Venus, and she rules over all beauty and desire and love, and she is very beautiful as is known to one who reads their books [i.e. Greek mythology].

(23) AND LAMECH SAID TO HIS WIVES: this verse is in the poetic style, as you will see, God willing, in the section

*Beshalah*, the poetical signs in the Twenty-Four Books, and the difference between prose and poetry in those books. And the principle in the rule of poetry in the Holy Tongue is to break each compound sentence into its parts, and to join from them short phrases almost equal in the measure of their length, they are called lines or measures, and one stations a line close by another line, so that they are parallel in meaning, and this is the beauty of poetry and its gracefulness. Sometimes the subject of the first line is repeated in the second line with only a change in the words, like:

Adah	and Zillah,	hear	my voice;
You wives	of Lamech,	hearken	to what I say

And likewise:

The right hand	of the Lord	is exalted,
The right hand	of the Lord	does valiantly! (Ps. 118:16)

And similarly:

He who digs                    a pit        will fall            into it,  
 He who sets rolling    a rock,    it will return    to him.  
 (Prov. 26:27)

And there are those in which the subject of the first line is similar to the subject of the second line, whether complete or partially, and sometimes it is opposite to it in subject, but similar to it in the parts of the sentence, like:

Faithful        are the wounds        of a friend;  
 Profuse        are the kisses        of an enemy. (ibid. 27:6)

I called                    out of my distress            on the Lord,  
 He answered me        in the spacious place        of God.  
 (Ps. 118:5)

And sometimes, one word is missing, or one of the parts of the sentence in one line, and they rely on what is written in its sister verse. And the commentators say that this word that is written in the sister verse, extends to another word along with it, like

When Israel	went forth	from Egypt,
The House of Jacob	-----	from a people of
		strange language,
Judah	became	his sanctuary,
Israel	-----	his dominion.
The sea	looked	and fled,
The Jordan	-----	turned back.
The mountains	skipped	like rams,
The hills	-----	like young sheep.
What ails you,	O, sea,	that you flee?
-----	O, Jordan,	that you turn back
At the presence	of the Lord,	tremble, O earth,
At the presence	of the God of Jacob.	-----
(Ps. 114:1-5,7)		

And also here:

I have slain	a man	for wounding me,
-----	a young man	for striking me.
If Cain	is avenged	sevenfold,
Truly Lamech	-----	seventy-sevenfold.

And it is not necessary to dwell on this here, for this is not my intention, but rather only to remark that this verse is in poetic form, and it is the first poem to come into our hands from those early years. And it is divided as we mentioned, each line opposite its fellow, and it is called, among the interpreters of the Torah, "the doubling of the subject with the same words [parallelism]."

HEAR [*SHEMA'AN*]: this comes with an additional *nun*, but without a *he*, and it would be proper if it were *shema'nah*.  
 YOU WIVES OF LAMECH: a noun in place of a pronoun, according to the rule of the Holy Tongue, and especially in the art of the poem, to change the words.

HEARKEN [*HA'AZENAH*]: according to its rule, it should be *ha'azenenah* with a doubling of the *nun*, one for the root, since its root is *alef-shin-nun*, and one for the fem. plural ending. And they left out the first one and compensated for it with the *dagesh* in the second *nun*.

WHAT I SAY: a noun, and the absolute is *IMRAH*, of the pattern of *shifhah* and *simlah*. According to the opinion of Qimhi, in [*Sefer*] *Hashorashim*, under the root *alef-resh*. The *taw* is found in place of the *he* of the feminine. And it is conceivable for the absolute to be *AMARAH*, in the meter of *BERAKHAH* and *TSEDAQAH*, but we have not found this absolute of it in Scripture. And these two patterns are the

same in the construct and with the pronominal suffixes.

I HAVE SLAIN A MAN FOR WOUNDING ME ETC.: Scripture does not mention the occurrence to which Lamech refers in this verse. And in this matter, each of the commentators went his own way and according to his own thought; one said this, and another said that. And it is correct in unclear matters like these to listen to the words of our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, the true recipients, who said in the Midrash that Lamech was blind, and he went out to hunt game with Tubal-Cain, his son, who was young boy. And when the boy saw Cain in the distance, hidden among the trees of the field, he appeared to him like a wild animal. And he said to Lamech that he should shoot there, and he struck him and he died. And when they came there, and he saw that it was Cain, his ancestor, he clapped his hands together in his great sorrow. And he did not know that his son stood there, and he struck him between them. And his wives were greatly sorrowed, and they left him, saying that he was the son of the first murderer, and he followed in his father's footsteps. And he said to them, to appease them with words, as Rashi interprets with surprise, "was the man (whom) I killed (considered) my wounder [on whom I took revenge]," that is to say, "that the wound will be charged to my name, and the boy for my wound," (he thought as if to say, "was I not

mistaken, and do not worry that God will punish me.") rather Cain, who killed deliberately, will be avenged sevenfold, will it not be proper for Lamech, who only killed in error, to be avenged seventy-sevenfold upon the one who wounds him. And, according to the interpretation of Rashi, the interrogative *he* is missing. And there is one who interprets that he said this to them, "In truth the man I killed for wounding me was Cain, and the boy [killed] by my wound was Tubal-Cain, however, I was mistaken, and I will not be punished for this etc. And do not be surprised at what they call Tubal-cain a "youth [*na'ar*]" in the Midrash, and in the phrase of Lamech, he is a "boy [*yeled*]," since these words refer to young man. And since, in the previous verse it is related about him that he was the first to produce tools of bronze and iron, it is not plausible to conceive plans and to invent great and worthy work such as this until one has become an enlightened and knowledgable man. And one could say that he was called a youth and a boy in comparison to the years of the men of those generations, who lived eight or nine hundred years. And the proof for this in from the promises of comfort of Isaiah the prophet (chapter 65:20), when he said, "...for the child [*na'ar*] shall die a hundred years old etc." He means, that when he dies at the age of one hundred, it will be possible to call him a child, and he

died in his youth, and he concludes and says, "...for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be..." (*ibid.* v.22) He means that their days will become long like the tree's so that it will be proper to call a centenarian a youth, and, even though the words of our sages, may their memory be blessed, do not need corroboration, in spite of this, I am not able to desist from noting that the author Joseph ben Gurion [Josephus] in his *Antiquities*, cites this event, while it was a long time before the Amoraim, the authors of the Midrash. And it is possible that this was such a famous and well known thing in the days of Moses, that he omitted it, and only quoted this beautiful sentence. And a pleasant interpretation which agrees with the continuation of the text is found in one of the writers, not of our people. He said that it was possible that in those days injustice had already begun to increase on the face of the earth, and that armed men dwelled in the deserts, caves, and clefts in the rocks, and would afflict the settled people and steal, pillage, and rob their cattle and property. And they would also take their women by force, until the settled people, tillers of the ground, and dwellers in tents, were forced to organize to defend their lives, and to build walled cities and doors with bolts. And they invented strategies and different tools with which the

weak could take vengeance on the strong, and defeat them. And the forging of swords and spears that is in the previous verse is very fitting for this end, for by it [the forging] they made for themselves these instruments which kill without strength. And the weak person who has in his hand a sword or a spear can say "I am strong." And since Tubal-Cain the son of Lamech was the father of this art, and it is possible that he learned it from Lamech his father, according to the opinion of Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, Lamech became exalted before his wives. And he said to them, "I am no longer afraid of any man who will rise against me, to do an injustice to me. And if the strong man will do battle with me with a rock or with the fist, and he harms me, or if the youth rises against me with the strength of his hands and his arms, and wounds me, will it not be easy for me to kill him with the instruments of destruction which are in my hand, and to take my revenge from him seventy-sevenfold." And the word "youth [yeled]" also applies to *na'ar* before he becomes a man. And it is possible that he is a ruffian and very strong. It says "...and took counsel with the young men [yeladiim]..." (1Kgs. 12:8) And "I have slain [haragti]," is in the place "I will slay" like, "...I will give [natati] the price of the field..." (Gen. 23:13) "...which I took [laqahtu] from the hands of the

Amorites..." (*ibid.* 48:22), and many like it. And likewise, Ibn Ezra interpreted these words according to his way, with an explanation of this style.

WOUNDING: Rashi interpreted, "the wound of a sword of an arrow, *machube* in Old French." And I do not know what he means, perhaps it must be *coudre*, and, in German it has the meaning of *offne Munde*, except that this normally refers only to the burn, and not to the wound of a sword or an arrow. And in the Rashi manuscript, "*navrer* in Old French" is written, and it is correct, without doubt.<sup>75</sup>

SEVENFOLD: and thus seventy-sevenfold, the limited number comes in the place of the unlimited number for the magnification and exaggeration of the matter.

CAIN IS AVENGED: it means that revenge will be taken on the one who killed him, as we wrote above.

(25) INSTEAD OF ABEL: in his place.

(26) BEGAN: from the doubled verbs, and its root is *het-lamed-lamed*, and it is from the conjugation in which the verbal noun is not formed from the addition [i.e. the *taw*]. And its meaning is "beginning," [*tehilah*] it means that they began to pray and to call upon the name of God. ([cf.] Ibn Ezra) And Qimhi, in [*Sefer Hashorashim*], under the root *het-lamed-lamed*, wrote that "then the sons of men began to be called by the names of the sons of men, and the idols and

images by the name of God," and he wrote further that it is perhaps from the word "desecration [*hilul*]" (thus Rashi, may his memory be blessed, interprets). And the meaning is that in the days of Enosh they erred after idol worship, and the calling by the name of God began then.

5 (1) THIS IS THE BOOK OF THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM: the counting of the offspring that came from Adam, and they are the sons which it will mention.

WHEN GOD CREATED: it follows that he began with Adam himself. It mentions about him that God created him from nothingness and made him in His image.

(2) MALE AND FEMALE ETC.: it mentions that as He created man from nothingness, and made him in His image, likewise He made and created woman.<sup>76</sup>

AND HE BLESSED THEM: he gave them the power of procreation, so that they would forever be blessed with many sons and daughters. And the intention is to say that generations are [a result] of the blessing of God, for Adam and his wife were not born, but were created fm nothingness, and they were blessed to do this.

AND HE NAMED THEM MAN: because the name "man" includes all the human race,<sup>77</sup> it mentions that God called the first pair by this name, since all of them [the human race] were in

them [Adam and Eve] in potentiality.

(3) HE BECAME THE FATHER OF A SON IN HIS OWN LIKENESS, AFTER HIS IMAGE: it is well known that everything which is born from the living is in the likeness of those that bore it, and in their image. But since man is superior in his likeness and image, as it is said about him that He made him in the image of God, here it explains that his descendents would also be similar, in the same superior image. And it did not say this about Cain and Abel, because it did not want to be lengthy about them. But it explains this about Seth, because the world was established from him or because the man was created with the goal of a perfect creation, it is said about Seth because he was like him in power and beauty.

(5) THUS ALL THE DAYS THAT ADAM LIVED ETC.: this is not a sentence in itself, and this information is not necessary, for the matter is explained from what preceeds, rather, it is connected to the word "and he died [wayamot]," and it is all one sentence as if it said "when [the days of Adam] were..." It means that all the days that Adam had lived were finished, and were 930 years, and then he died. And there are many *waws* in the Torah which serve this purpose, to join two sentence which have a connection of time or place or cause between them, like "but he who did not regard the word

of the Lord left [waya'azov] his slaves and his cattle in the field." (Ex. 9:21) It means "left ['zav]." And behold, you see that the days of men were very long in those days, until the generation after the Flood. And Nachmanides, may his memory be blessed, wrote that the reason for this is "that the first man, the handiwork of God, was made in absolute perfection regarding beauty, strength, and stature. Even after it was decreed upon him that he be mortal, it was in his nature to live a long time. But when the flood came upon the earth, the atmosphere became tainted, and as a result their days kept on decreasing. Until the Flood, their days were about the length of Adam's, some even lived longer than Adam. And Shem, who was born before the Flood, lived six hundred years; he benefitted from his innate strength, but the tainted air after the flood caused him harm. The days of his sons who were born after the flood were still more shortened, until they came down to four hundred years. You can see that this degree of longevity stayed with them until the generation of the dispersion, when the change of climates caused by the dispersion affected them, and their days were shortened. Thus you find that the days of Peleg, in whose days the earth was divided, came down to half their days; two hundred years. It would appear that in the generations of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, people lived

seventy or eighty years, just as Moses [Nachmanides: our teacher] mentioned in his prayer [cf. Ps. 90:10]. But for the righteous ones in their generations, 'The fear of the Lord prolongs life...' [Prov. 10:27] for them. For Pharaoh wondered about Jacob's old age, and Jacob in turn spoke to him about the long days of his fathers, even as he said, '...and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers...' Thus far his words. And behold, with the providence of God, may He be praised, over the human race, He gave long life to those generations, so that from their investigations and experiences, the generations that come after them will come and be brought to perfect knowledge. The knowledge which the Creator, may He be praised, produced in Adam would have been, because of this, for naught, if their lives were like our lives today, for death would have overtaken them before they understood the nature of the existing things, for they took their beginnings from the senses over a long period of time, and by this they were able to introduce all the tools which were invented in the world for the needs of man. (from our master and teacher, R. Isaac Abarbanel [1437-1508]). And in *Genesis Rabbah* they said "...they lived a long time without trouble or suffering [...] so that they might understand the [astronomical] cycles and calculations." [24:5]

(22) ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD: he set all his will to the love of God, and busied himself in understanding His ways and the works of His hands, and he recognized his Creator after he reached the age of sixty-five, as is the meaning of "...before whom my fathers walked..." (Gen. 48:15) And thus his sons, "...and Noah walked with God..." (Gen. 6:9)

(24) FOR GOD TOOK [LAQAH] HIM: the matter of the death of the righteous man, from the meaning of "...and afterward thou wilt receive [tiqahani] me to glory..." (Ps. 73:24)

(29) THIS [ZEH]: this refers to the thing which is pointed at by the finger, and it the nearest in place, but sometimes it is also said about that which is far (however, the form *halazeh* is only said about the far thing which is pointed out, see Genesis 37:19).<sup>78</sup> And it also refers to the thing which is alluded to in thought or speech, "Is this [zeh] not what we said to you..." (Ex. 14:12) Or, as it is known from the prophetic allusion, "...this [zeh] is my God, and I will praise him..." (*ibid.* 15:2) And our sages, may their memory be blessed, said that it teaches that they would point with the finger etc.<sup>79</sup> And in reference to the thing which is not [specifically] alluded to in the next sentence, *hahu* [that] is said [instead of *zeh*].

SHALL BRING US RELIEF FROM OUR WORK: it is conceivable that he knew by prophecy that through this child the ground would

thrive, and thus it is that by him the world would continue to exist. He, too, was a man of the earth, for thus it is written. And behold, "shall bring us relief [*yenahenu*]," is from the root *nun-het-ayin*, and not *nun-waw-het*, but it is close to its meaning, for relief [*nehayah*] is rest [*enuhah*] from the toil. And it is the way of the Hebrews to preserve the meaning in names, but not the words, like Jerubbaal [Jud. 6:32] who is sometimes called "Jerubboshet," since the Baal is also called by the name "*boshet*" [shame].

FROM THE TOIL OF OUR HANDS: its meaning is the labor and the effort. And Rashi, may his memory be blessed, wrote that Noah prepared an instrument for plowing for them, and because of this they said, "he shall give us rest from the toil of our hands." And this is the meaning of "he shall bring us relief," and it is his opinion, therefore, that they also preserved the words in this name, as is fitting.

6 (1) BEGAN [*HEHEL*]: meaning "beginning." And it is from the *hif'il* conjugation, from the double-*'ayin* verbs.

TO MULTIPLY [*LAROU*]: an infinitive, from the *qal* conjugation, of the double-*'ayins*.

(2) THE SONS OF GOD SAW THAT THE DAUGHTERS OF MEN: Onkelos translated "...sons of princes [*ravrevaya*] the daughters [*benat*; Mendelssohn:*bene*] of man..." And it is conceivable

that in those days men were divided into two groups. One group was born of Adam and Eve in the image of God, with great perfection of height and strength, and they had many children, as it is written, "...and he had other sons and daughters..." [Gen. 5:30] And they were wise and enlightened, and all these matters were ordered according to wisdom and the tradition which they possessed. And because of this they were called the sons of God, since they preserved the way of God which was accepted among them, and there was also an ability to distinguish to bring them near to the service of God, may He be praised. And the other group was of the sons of those who were born after they began idol worship. They ceased to enlighten their minds, and the men became perplexed, haters of settlement and regulation of the group. They dwelt in deserts, under and in caves, and crevices in the rock, like wild animals and beasts of the forests. And they had daughters. And when the sons of God saw that the daughters of these men, who were called the sons of men, were fair [ἄσπετος], it means "beautiful [γαρὰ], " the proclivity to desire conquered them. They left their worthy level, and took women for themselves by violence, "from all that they chose." And they also came by fornication upon the daughters of man, of the lower level, and the matter was not known until children

were born to them, and they recognized that were not of the sons of the rest of the men, but rather they were born from them who were great and strong in their nature. But they were inferior [*nofli*»] to their fathers in height and strength, as is the meaning of "...am I not inferior [*nofel*] to you..." (Job. 12:3) And because of this they were called *Nephili*» [see v.7], and these were the mighty men as opposed to the rest of the sons of man.

(3) SHALL NOT ABIDE [*YADON*]: there are those who say that its root is *nun-dalet-nun*, in the meaning of "...and he put his sword back into its sheath [*nedanah*]...", (1Chr. 21:27) for the body is like a sheath for the spirit, [as this verse] testifies: "As for me, Daniel, my spirit was within me [*nidneh*] anxious...." (Dan. 7:15) And it would be proper to be *YIDON*, like *YIGOSH*, except that the quiescent letter is in exchange for the *dagesh*, like "...when Jacob was boiling [*WAYAZED*] pottage...." (Gen. 25:29) which would be proper to be *WAYIZED* or *WAYAZED*. Thus wrote Qimhi in [*Sefer*] *Hashorashi*», under the root *dalet-waw-nun* and the root *nun-dalet-nun*. And according to the opinion of Ibn Ezra, it is conceivable that it is from the root *dalet-waw-nun*, and its meaning is like *nun-dalet-nun*, as we have found in "Though his height [*si'o*] mount up to the heavens...." (Job. 21:6) the root of which is *sin-waw-alef*, and its meaning is

like *nun-sin-alef*. And it would be proper for *yadun* to have a *shuruq*, but we have also found it with a *holam*, like "...and the dust returns [*weyashov*]..." (Qoh. 12:7) And the explanation [of the verse] is that my spirit will not be in that sheath, which is the body, forever, but I will remove it from there. And there are those who say that it is from the form *din* [law] for the spirit is a judge in the body. And the correct [opinion], in the opinion of R. Judah Hayyuj and Qimhi, in the name of his father, is that it is from the root *dalet-waw-nun*, meaning "strife," like "...stirs up strife [*madon*]..." (Prov. 15:18, 28:25, 29:22), in the pattern of "lodging place [*malon*]." from the root, *lamed-waw-nun*. And its interpretation is "that my celestial spirit, which I breathed into man will not always be in conflict and strife with the flesh."

"For he is flesh [*bashagan*]," it is like "since he is also flesh, and not celestial spirit alone, but is composed of flesh and spirit. And the *shin* has a *patah* like "...for why [*shalamah*] should I be..." (Song. 1:7) "...you arose [*shaqanti*], Deborah..." And it is derived from *asher*, and the word is a composite as if it said, because that [*ba'avur asher*] he was also flesh. And it is translated in German, "*diweil er doch Fleisch auch ist.*"

BUT HIS DAYS WILL BE A HUNDRED A TWENTY YEARS: I will set a

time of one hundred and twenty years for him, if they repent, I will sustain them in the world, and if not I will destroy them. And thus, in Targum Onkelos "I will give them a term of one hundred a twenty years, if they repent."

(4) THE NEPHILIM WERE ON THE EARTH IN THOSE DAYS: "the intention was that this was during the first generations who were called the 'sons of God,' because they were of absolute perfection, and it is they who, with the daughters of men, begot *nefilim* [inferior ones], 'and also after that,' for the Nephilim themselves begat Nephilim like them. 'These were the mighty men that were of old, men of reknown,' is that men, after the flood, upon seeing these mighty ones, and would remember the Nephilim and say, 'there have already been mightier men than these in the ages which were before us.' These were the 'men of reknown' in every generation afterward. This is a fitting explanation of this chapter." (The words of Nachmanides) And a small hint of this matter remains in the stories of the peoples, but the Greek poets confused the matters, and darkened the light of truth with their lies, to that point that it almost could not be distinguished from the vanity which they added to it, as is well known to the reader of their books. They said that the gods fornicated with the daughters of men, and the beings called *Halbgötter* were born to them, and from them were the

mighty ones born who were known by their names.

(5) EVERY IMAGINATION [YETSER]: desire of the heart of man and its ideas are called this since it forms and enacts the matters that are in the heart, which the heart desires.

(6) WAS SORRY [MAYINAHEN]: from the *nif'al*, and not from the *hitpa'el*. It would be proper if there were a *patah* under the *nun*, except that the *het* does not accept a compensated *dagesh*. And this is its interpretation, according to Rashi, may his memory be blessed, "The thinking of God was reversed from the attribute of mercy to the attribute of justice.

There arose in His thinking the question what to do with the man whom He had made on earth. And similarly every instance of *nihun* in the Bible has the meaning of reconsidering what to do. [For example:] '...or a son of man, that he should repent [weyitnehan]....,' (Num. 23:19) [Mendelssohn has v.23] '...and have compassion [yitnehan] on His servants....,'

(Deut. 32[:36], Ps. 135:14) 'And the Lord repented [wayinaneh] of the evil....,' (Ex. 32:14) 'I repent [nihaniti] that I have made [Saul] king...' (1Sam. 15:11) All of them indicate a change of mind." Thus far his words. And behold it is the complete truth that every usage of *nehanah* is the movement of the heart from one counsel to the counsel that is opposed to it, sometimes from the evil to the good, and sometimes the opposite, like "...then I will repent

[*vaniḥanti*] of the good..." However, what the rabbi said about the verse, "that he had made man on the earth," is forced. And Ibn Ezra wrote, "It is obvious that He is not man who repents, but Torah speaks in human terms, for one who destroys what he has made gives the appearance that he repented." And this is the most fitting for the plain meaning of the text.

AND IT GRIEVED HIM TO HIS HEART: Onkeles translated, "...and he said to himself that he would break their strength according to his will" And the meaning is that the Omnipresent considered to sadden man. He [Onkelos] strayed from the plain meaning of the Scripture in order to expand on the attribute of sorrow from God, may He be exalted, which is elevated and lofty above every lesser attribute. And in the words of our rabbis, may their memory be blessed, in *Genesis Rabbah*, [27:4] "A certain skeptic asked R. Joshua b. Qarḥa, he said to him 'Do you not maintain that the Holy One, praised be He, foresees the future?' He said to him, 'Yes.' He said to him, 'But it is written, and it grieved him to his heart?' He said to him, 'Has a son ever been born to you?' He said to him, 'Yes.' He said to him, 'And what did you do?' He said to him, 'I rejoiced and made all others rejoice.' He said to him, 'Yet did you not know that he would eventually die?' He said to him, 'Gladness at the time

of gladness, and mourning at the time of mourning.' He said to him, 'Even so was it with the Holy One, blessed be He...' even though it was revealed before Him that in their end would be to sin, and His end would be to destroy them, He did not cease from creating them." The enlightened man will understand that the spiritual attributes which are called passions (*Leidenschaften*), or the emotions of the soul are divided into two kinds, between which there is a great difference. The first kind branches off from the possessions and from the true powers of the soul, and they arouse the power of desire to cling to a thing or be removed from it, according to the good or the evil that is found in it, like love or hate, amusement or anger, satisfaction and joy or sorrow. And all of these are complete in essence and first praiseworthy proofs in the mind of the enlightened man. And they do not cause sin, except when they come out of the bounds of equilibrium and transgress the set law, for then they trouble the thoughts of man, and confuse his mind, and through them he comes to great foolishness, for the power of desire prevailed over the power of understanding, and this is the source of all rebellion and wickedness, as we wrote above. But, as long as they do not escape their bounds, they are in man for splendour, and, in essence, there is no degradation or destruction in them.

The root of the second kind is lack and negation, and they only have reality in a limited sense. Positing this lack from which they branch off, these are their examples: avarice, remorse, cowardice, despair and the like, for avarice is not conceivable without the many needs of the avaricious person, when he worries that he will not find all his needs. And remorse is not conceivable without the changing of the idea and the counsel, and cowardice is not conceivable without the weak person, nor despair unless hope is lacking. And the same with all of them. And these ways are deficiencies in essence and at first, but from the point of view of man, they are sometimes praiseworthy, for they can bring him to good deeds, as is known from remorse and the like. And behold, it seems, from the words of our sages, may their memory be blessed, that they did not refrain from relating the first kind to God, may He be exalted. They said about Him that He was angry, joyous, happy, and saddened, since, with Him, these ways are clean of any lack and from all degradation and vanity in the world. He is angry in judgement, and joyous in righteousness. He is happy in the complete good, and saddened by the truly evil, without any confusion of thought and delusion. His name is exalted because of this, an exaltation without end. And therefore, no change or lack comes out from any of His attributes, God

forbid. But if they are sometimes lacking in the bosom of man, they will produce in him the lesser attributes. This is only because of the reason which we mentioned, that they transgress their law, and they confuse the mind with a shortness of perception. And all of this is from the first kind of emotions which we mentioned. However, they do not mention the second kind of emotions about God, may He be exalted, at all, except metaphorically, and to speak in human language, so that the hearers will understand. And therefore we said about the word "was sorry," [*wayinahem*] whose meaning is an emotion of the second kind, that the Torah speaks in human language. However, with the word "was grieved," [*wayit'atsev*] which shows hatred for the truly evil, it is said that in the hour of sadness, He is truly sad, as we have mentioned.

(7) SO THE LORD SAID: it is conceivable that this is joined with his heart, which is written above.

I WILL BLOT OUT MAN: He speaks in general.

MAN AND BEAST: "Even they perverted their way. (*Genesis Rabbah*) Another interpretation: everything was created for the sake of man, and since he is destroyed, what is the need for these?" (Rashi)

FOR I AM SORRY THAT I HAVE MADE THEM: "I have considered what to do because I made them." He followed his way in the

meaning of the word *nehamaḥ*, which is a word of reconsideration. And see what we have written above.

(8) FAVOR [*HEN*]: doing good without reward is called "favor [*ḥaninah*]," and this favor is the preparation for this doing of good. And it is from the double-*'ayin* verbs, from the root *ḥet-nun-nun*. And God is the true gracious One, for if he is deserving, thus it is done to him. Therefore, the request for a favor from God is called "supplication [*teḥinah*]," "...and I will lay my supplication before God..." [Deut. 3:23] and He alone is gracious, for favor is in Him from the first. And no-one is called gracious, except the Gracious one, but it is not necessary to expound upon it here.

End of the *Bi'ur* to *Parashat Bereshit*

Moses Mendelssohn's German translation of the Pentateuch and its accompanying Hebrew commentary, popularly known as the *Bi'ur*, was published in five volumes between 1780 and 1783, with the title *Sefer Netivot Hashalom* ("Paths of Peace," cf. Prov. 3:17). The work also contains a grammatical and masoretic commentary, the *Tiqun Soferim*. This commentary was included in the *Bi'ur* because of Mendelssohn's desire to publish a work which demonstrated the utmost care and attention to the details of the biblical text. The *Tiqun Soferim* was to include the best of the traditional sources on the Masorah, and Sandler gives a lengthy list of sources utilized by the its authors.<sup>20</sup>

Of that which has been written about the *Bi'ur*, a great deal has been devoted to a discussion of its origin and of Mendelssohn's motivations for such an undertaking.<sup>21</sup> The consensus among scholars seems to be that, as Mendelssohn himself states in his introduction,<sup>22</sup> the translation began as a private endeavor for the education of his children. Later, bolstered by the encouragement of Solomon Dubno, Mendelssohn recognized the value of this work for a wider

audience, and decided to publish it for the benefit of the larger Jewish community.<sup>23</sup>

A prospectus of the work, entitled '*Alim Litruifah*' ("Leaves of Healing," cf. Ez. 47:12) was published in Amsterdam in 1778. It contained a lengthy introduction signed by Dubno, but apparently written, for the most part, by Mendelssohn himself,<sup>24</sup> and sample chapters of the translation and commentary from Exodus and Numbers. The prospectus sparked interest in Mendelssohn's project, and aided in securing the numerous subscriptions needed for the publication of the complete work.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, in the end, Mendelssohn had to invest a considerable sum of his own.<sup>26</sup>

Although Dubno had been the driving force in this undertaking, he and Mendelssohn had a falling out, and Dubno left the project shortly after the publication of the Genesis volume in 1780. In his introduction, Mendelssohn states that he does not know why Dubno left.<sup>27</sup> Scholars have offered several explanations, but, as Weinberg has pointed out, a conclusive solution to this mystery has yet to emerge.<sup>28</sup> As a result of this parting of the ways, Mendelssohn had to seek the help of others in order to complete the *Bi'ur*.<sup>29</sup>

As noted above, the first volume, Genesis, appeared in

1780. For this volume, Dubno wrote both the commentary (excluding *Parashat Bereshit*, written by Mendelssohn) and the *Tiqun Soferim*. Exodus appeared in 1781; Mendelssohn wrote most of the commentary, supplemented by Dubno's glosses, who again contributed the *Tiqun Soferim*. Leviticus appeared that same year, with the commentary written by Naphtali Herz Wessely (under Mendelssohn's strict supervision, as was the entire work). The *Tiqun Soferim* for this and the succeeding volumes was written by Rabbi Shalom of Mezerich. For the fourth volume, Numbers, completed in 1782, Mendelssohn was aided in the commentary by Aaron Zechariah Friedenthal of Jaroslav. The final volume, Deuteronomy, was prepared with the help of Herz Homberg, and appeared in the spring of 1783.<sup>90</sup>

Mendelssohn's translation of the Torah into German is a landmark event in the history of Jewish literature. First and foremost, it was the first Bible translation by a Jew into a modern European language. Furthermore, it was an intentional attempt to bring the benefits of the Enlightenment to the Jewish community, which, at that point was, to a great extent, cut off from the "modern" world in several ways, one of the most obvious being language, by teaching it German. Thus the translation is printed in Hebrew script, the underlying assumption being that the

average reader would know Hebrew and would be familiar with the Pentateuch, and could therefore learn the German by comparing the original with the translation, side by side. The purpose of the commentary was twofold. It served to explain and justify the translation in any place where it seemed to stray from the literal by supporting it with the opinion of one or more of the traditional commentators, or by explaining explicitly Mendelssohn's reasons for rejecting the traditional interpretation and choosing his own way.<sup>91</sup> Of equal importance for the commentary was the way in which Bible translation was viewed within the Jewish community. Although the Torah had been translated by Jews into numerous languages (Aramaic, Greek, Arabic, and Judeo-German, to name a few), a translation was seen only as an aid for those whose Hebrew was inadequate, and could not stand on its own as a legitimate literary endeavor. Indeed, rendering the Torah into a foreign tongue and using the alphabet of the Holy Tongue for a foreign language were viewed by some as a desecration. To publish a translation alone, then, would have been considered sacrilegious, and would have met with vociferous objection from the leaders of most Jewish communities. The commentary, therefore, in addition to explaining the translation, and the meaning of the text itself, when Mendelssohn felt it necessary, gave the book a

format which, in theory, met the acceptable standards of the time.

Despite these precautions, the work seemed destined to face strong opposition, partially due to Mendelssohn's (undeserved) reputation as an assimilationist and reformer (even before the advent of Reform). It is only due to some intricate maneuvering, including obtaining a subscription from the King of Denmark, that enabled the work to be published without too much controversy, although in later years it was banned by several rabbis.<sup>72</sup> It should be pointed out, however, that both Levinson<sup>73</sup> and Weinberg<sup>74</sup> have noted that, in the literature on the *Bi'ur*, the amount devoted to this controversy is out of proportion with its role in history.

Although reference to "the literature on the " has been made above, in actuality that literature is rather limited, especially what is available in Hebrew and English. Although the work itself was popular in its day, and went through numerous printings in several cities, comparatively little attention has been paid to it, especially by modern scholars. Most of what has been written deals with the origin of the work and the controversy it aroused, and not with its content.<sup>75</sup> Levinson has pointed out that "A poignant reflection of the oblivion in which Mendelssohn's

*SNH* [Sefer Netivot Hashalom] is now shrouded is the complete absence of any reference to it by the Jewish Publication Society's Committee for the Translation of The Torah in the recently published companion volume to the 1962 Torah translation..."<sup>94</sup> Yet Englander states that when evaluating "...Mendelssohn's most significant contribution to the Jew...his influence as translator and exegete is paramount."<sup>97</sup> Excluding the work of Sandler and Levenson, the *Bi'ur* is discussed only in articles or as part of larger works. The present work is, as far as this author knows, the first attempt to render into English a significant portion of the *Bi'ur*.

Mendelssohn wrote a lengthy introduction to his commentary, and called it *Or Lintivah* ("Light on the Path," cf. Ps. 119:105). He did not give a title to the first section of this introduction, but Sandler accurately called it "Problems of the Masorah."<sup>98</sup> To a great extent it is a reiteration of the traditional Jewish views on the origin of the Torah and the transmission of the text. Mendelssohn accepts the Talmudic and Midrashic view that the entire Pentateuch was dictated to Moses by God on Mt. Sinai, including the last eight verses describing Moses' death. The language in which God spoke to Moses was Hebrew, the same language with which the world was created and which Adam and

Eve spoke in the garden of Eden. Although he was well aware of the problems associated with a text copied and recopied by scribes, he maintains that these problems did not affect the transmission of the Biblical text.

In regard to the pointing and the accents, Mendelssohn took an even more conservative stand, and rejected the contention of Levita that these were unknown to the rabbis of the Talmud.<sup>99</sup> In deference to Levita, however, he excuses him for this, and is sure that if Levita saw Mendelssohn's proofs, he would agree with him.<sup>100</sup> Even the *Qere* and the *Ketiv* are attributed by him to Moses.<sup>101</sup>

Mendelssohn also raises the question of the alphabet in which the Torah was "originally" given. After much discussion, in which he cites both Jewish and non-Jewish sources on the Hebrew and Assyrian script debate, he draws the not unexpected conclusion that the Torah was given in the Assyrian script (the script in which Hebrew is presently written).<sup>102</sup>

The second section of *Or Lintivah*, "About the Translations," is mainly concerned with the history of Torah translations in general, and Mendelssohn's account of his own translation in specific. It has been shown that Mendelssohn relied heavily on the work of two authors for this section of the introduction. One is Azariah dei Rossi's

*Me'or 'Enayim*, the other is the work of a non-Jew, Johann Gottfried Eichhorn's *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*.<sup>103</sup> It is important to note that, despite Mendelssohn's conservative nature, he did not hesitate to utilize the work of a non-Jew, even in the traditional setting of a Torah commentary. At the same time, it is also necessary to point out that Mendelssohn, though familiar with non-Jewish translations of the Bible, discounts their value to Jews (but not to non-Jews) "for the Christian translators, since they did not have the tradition of our sages...and do not listen to the words of the Masorah, and have not even accepted the points and the accents which are in our hands, make the Torah like a broken wall."<sup>104</sup>

Mendelsohn begins the history of Torah translations with Onkelos, whom he holds in great esteem,<sup>105</sup> though even he, due to the nature of translation "...needed...to change, to add, to delete, and to alter the order of the words..."<sup>106</sup> He mentions the work of Aquila, and disputes the notion that Aquila and Onkelos are the same person.<sup>107</sup>

He then calls into question the authorship of the translation attributed to Yonatan b. Uziel, due to some unquestionable anachronisms.<sup>108</sup> He then suggests, against the opinions of both Eichhorn and dei Rossi, that Targum Yonatan and Targum Yerushalmi are two versions of the same

translation.<sup>109</sup> He then draws back somewhat and concludes his comments on Targum Yonatan with these words, "and I know that it is possible to respond to all these arguments, for there is no objective path in matters like this, also, the tradition doesn't mention them, and everyone in Israel is allowed to choose the way which is right in his eyes."<sup>110</sup>

He then addresses himself to the Septuagint, and draws his information from both the traditional sources and from the Letter of Aristeas. Sandler remarks that, despite Mendelssohn's acknowledgement of Aristeas' exaggerations and fabrications, he nonetheless relies on his historical accuracy,<sup>111</sup> since "...all agree generally about the stories of Aristeas, even if they disagree about the particulars."<sup>112</sup>

Following this, he discusses the Arabic translation of Sa'adya Gaon, the Judeo-Persian translation of Jacob b. Joseph Tavus, and an anonymous Greek and Spanish translation.

Mendelssohn then turns his attention to the Judeo-German translations, namely Levita, Josef Witzzenhausen and Yequiel Blitz. Mendelssohn states that "...he has not seen the translation of R. Elijah [Levita]...", since, indeed, Levita did not produce a translation. The work in question was actually done by a convert, Michael Adam.<sup>113</sup> In

any case, the Judeo-German translations do not meet with his approval, especially that of Blitz, which he says is composed in "...a language of stammerers, very corrupt and perverted."<sup>114</sup>

After mentioning the non-Jewish translations, Mendelssohn finally relates his version of the origin of the *Bi'ur*, his method of translation and commentary, the disagreement with Dubno, and the parcelling out of the unfinished work to others.

According to Sandler, this concludes the introduction. The third part, not included in the present translation, deals with grammatical matters, and is, in his opinion, an appendix, and not part of the body of the introduction.<sup>115</sup>

The first section of Genesis, containing the biblical history from the creation to Noah is an especially rich and problematic portion. It stands to reason, therefore, that Mendelssohn undertook to write this part of the commentary himself.<sup>116</sup> Sandler points out several passages which are unique to the commentary on this section. Mendelssohn is interested in natural science. Even though it is not the purpose of this section to be a science textbook, he includes several contemporary Enlightenment ideas on this topic while discussing the creation.<sup>117</sup>

The Tree of Knowledge prompts Mendelssohn to include an

essay on Enlightenment ethics, in which he opposes Nachmanides' contention that "good and evil" are "the pleasant and the ugly."<sup>118</sup>

Sandler characterizes Mendelssohn's view of this portion as optimistic. Everything that happens to the human race, the expulsion from the garden, the loss of immortality, and so on, is, in the end, for the good of all, and is the product of God's divine grace.<sup>119</sup>

For Mendelssohn, the ethical model to be emulated is that of a complete balance between the various powers of the soul. Sandler states that Mendelssohn specifies four such powers (the power of movement, the power of feeling, the power of imagination, and the power of memory and arousal).<sup>120</sup> In fact, Mendelssohn mentions these four as examples of the powers of the soul, which actually number more than four. For example, Mendelssohn also mentions the power of the intellect and the power of desire.<sup>121</sup>

Another point which Mendelssohn stresses is that the Torah is the source for many of the various mythologies of the world, especially those which bear a resemblance to the Biblical stories. This is a clear response to some of the theories of the Biblical critics which were beginning to be promulgated in his day. According to Mendelssohn, all the myths of the world are based on the historical facts of the

Torah, although they have been distorted and confused in their transmission among the various peoples. An example of this is his identification of Tubal-Cain with Vulcan.<sup>122</sup> Sandler suggests that Mendelssohn's position on mythology is stronger in the *Bi'ur* than in his German writings, and that this may reflect an attempt on his part to hold a traditional position for the sake of his Hebrew readers.<sup>123</sup>

Although it is clear from Mendelssohn's reference to Eichhorn that he knew the works of non-Jews on the Bible, he tends to use them very sporadically in his commentary. He is a little more lax in this regard when dealing with "realia," to be discussed below.<sup>124</sup>

Biblical criticism was a popular Enlightenment subject, and Mendelssohn was acquainted with this literature as well. This, of course, was a challenge to the traditional concept of the Torah as the perfect word of God. A prime example of this is the question of the use of the tetragramaton and the word *elohim* as a way of distinguishing sources. Mendelssohn addresses this question, and attempts to resolve it while maintaining the integrity of the text.<sup>125</sup> It is also noteworthy that Mendelssohn is the originator of the phrase "the Eternal" (*der Ewige*) as the translation of the tetragramaton, a convention adopted by many later translators. He also addresses the question of the apparent

repetition of the creation story by stating, in agreement with the rabbinic tradition, that the second chapter contains the details given in general in the first chapter.<sup>126</sup>

It is now appropriate to move from the specific characteristics of *Parashat Bereshit* to the more general characteristics of the *Bi'ur* as a commentary. Despite Englander's<sup>127</sup> remarks about Mendelssohn's "paramount importance" as an exegete, he states that Mendelssohn "was not a creative or bold exegete."<sup>128</sup> Rather, he was a master builder, using the materials produced by previous scholars. Englander finds Mendelssohn to be concerned mostly with delivering a simple and direct commentary "...intelligible even to the average reader," and not predominantly occupied with philosophy and theology.<sup>129</sup>

The *Bi'ur* is an eclectic work. Mendelssohn draws repeatedly on the wealth of rabbinic literature, and, at least in *Parashat Bereshit*, relies quite heavily on Rashi, Nachmanides, Ibn Ezra, and Qimhi. He also does not hesitate to use kaballistic sources, and also refers to the most recent works of both Jewish and non-Jewish scholars. Indeed, Eichhorn's work came out the same year the first volume of the *Bi'ur* appeared. Englander notes that, "...while many of his comments are lengthy, they are not digressive..."<sup>130</sup>

Often this length is attributable to Mendelssohn's willingness to quote entire portions from the traditional commentators.

Mendelssohn also includes many grammatical points in the body of the commentary itself (rather than in the *Tiqun Soferim*). According to Englander, this represents part of the Haskalah emphasis on the Hebrew language, which, although revered in traditional circles, was rarely studied. "Undoubtedly, some of his readers obtained their first knowledge of Hebrew grammar and syntax from their reading of the Biur."<sup>131</sup>

Another aspect of the importance of the Hebrew language is seen in what Sandler calls "esthetic commentary." This is especially evident in Mendelssohn's concentration on Hebrew poetry, only one example of which is found in *Parashat Bereshit*, the song of Lamech.<sup>132</sup> Hebrew literature, as exemplified by biblical Hebrew is to be compared with the great literature of the German language, and is every bit as elegant and praiseworthy.<sup>133</sup>

A second emphasis which is quite evident in the *Bi'ur* is the concern with "realia." This is preoccupation with the minute details of life, such as the names of flowers and the like. For example, Mendelssohn's comment of the phrase "thorns and thistles" (Gen. 3:18) deals only with the proper

identification of these items of flora. Other examples, not in *Parashat Bereshit*, are the attention paid to describing colors, or the various materials used in building the Tabernacle.

Though this thesis does not deal with the *Tiqun Soferim* specifically, a word about its content is necessary. This commentary was included in the *Bi'ur* because Mendelssohn's desire to publish a work which demonstrated the utmost care and attention to the details of the biblical text. The *Tiqun Soferim* was to include of the best of the traditional sources on the Masorah, just as the *Bi'ur* contained the best of the traditional commentators. Sandler gives a lengthy list of sources utilized by the *Tiqun Soferim*'s authors.<sup>134</sup>

Sandler also mentions Mendelssohn's critical approach to the traditional commentators. Mendelssohn quotes freely from them (as they did from each other) when he feels it necessary. In addition, Mendelssohn is very exacting with his use of printed editions of the commentaries, many of which are, in his opinion, poorly edited. He repeatedly refers to a Rashi manuscript in his possession, which he feels often yields a better reading than the accepted printed version. Sandler cites examples of the same critical eye in relation to other authors, especially Rashbam (who is not cited in *Parashat Bereshit*).<sup>135</sup>

Mendelssohn took care to explain the foreign words (*la'azi*) which appear in Rashi. These have been a source of great interest to scholars because of their importance for understanding Rashi, and because of the light they shed on Old French. Because Jewish copyists did not know Old French, these words often became corrupted, and restoring them to the original and finding the proper meaning has been a task attempted by many. According to Sandler, Mendelssohn was the first to explore this field. He attempted not only to translate the Old French into German, but also to give its proper Old French form. For an example of this, see Mendelssohn's comments on "thorns and thistles" mentioned above.<sup>134</sup>

Mendelssohn's relationship with the traditional commentators is also evident in the way he used them to support his translation. Often a long quotation from Nachmanides is followed by the phrase "...and thus the German translator translated." This is not to say that the translation always agrees with the traditional commentators. That same phrase is just as likely to follow an explanation of his own, in which he rejects the interpretation of one or all of the commentators. In either case, he is quite careful, and goes to great lengths, to give a clear explanation for his translations, whenever he feels it is

necessary.<sup>137</sup>

This care reflects a twofold concern. Mendelssohn naturally wanted his translation to be as precise as humanly possible, given the natural deficiencies of translation. Therefore, he needed to demonstrate that his choice of words was the basis of much study and consideration. At the same time, this consideration could also serve to protect his work from the attacks of those who might disapprove of the project.

The German language appears in the commentary in relation to matters other than the translation. As mentioned above, Mendelssohn translates all the Old French in his citations from Rashi into German. Sometimes, when he needs a technical term, and the Hebrew seems to be inadequate, he will offer a German equivalent.<sup>138</sup> At other times, it seems as if he wants to teach his Hebrew reader a little more German than would be learned from the translation alone. In one instance, he offers a German translation for two common Hebrew phrases, *mitsvat 'aseh* and *mitsvat lo ta'aseh*.<sup>139</sup> In another place, after giving examples of Hebrew grammatical forms, he gives their German equivalents, with examples.<sup>140</sup>

Moses Mendelssohn has been called the first modern Jew and the father of Reform. Although the former may be accurate, the latter is far from the truth, and it would

have been quite an affront to him to be seen as anything other than a traditionally observant Jew. It has been demonstrated that, although he was definitely a proponent of the Enlightenment, his practice and faith were unimpeachably traditional. It is this combination of modernity and strict adherence to the religion of his ancestors that Mendelssohn wished to convey to the Jews of his generation through his writings. As Englander pointed out, "there can be no doubt that Mendelssohn introduced a new cultural era for the Jew, that paved the way for the inevitable developments in his social and religious life. What work of Mendelssohn's was it that brought about that new era for the Jew? Unquestionably it was his translation of the Torah into German. It first laid siege to and ultimately brought down the walls of the intellectual ghetto in which the Jew had lived for centuries."<sup>141</sup> As if this were not enough, Englander goes on to credit Mendelssohn with rescuing biblical study from the "...state into which...[it] had fallen."<sup>142</sup> Clearly, Englander sees the *Bi'ur* as a pivotal work in Jewish literature.

This view is shared by others. Klausner states that it is the translation and the *Bi'ur* alone which made Mendelssohn "...the head of the Maskilim from one side, and the head of the Apikorsim from the other side. And were it

not for it, it is possible that the name of Mendelssohn would have been lost to Hebrew literature, and would have been remembered only in German literature."<sup>143</sup>

Waxman's opinion is a little more reserved than that of Klausner or Englander. He says that the *Bi'ur* was Mendelssohn's greatest service "...which stimulated the Haskalah movement and turned it into a veritable instrument for the adjustment of Jewish life to modern conditions...and helped greatly toward the renaissance of Hebrew literature."<sup>144</sup>

Sandler, in the last chapter of his book has described most completely the place and influence of the *Bi'ur* as part of Jewish literature. In his opinion, the *Bi'ur* and its inception among the Berlin Maskilim marks the beginning of modern Hebrew literature. Of equal importance was the reaction it engendered, which continued well after the initial publication and the response to it. To a great extent, the *Bi'ur* became the symbolic bone of contention between the traditionalists and the modernists in the West, and later between the Chasidim and the Mitnagdim in the East. Sandler points out that nearly a century after the publication of the first volume, Mendele Mokher Seforim compared the impact of the *Bi'ur* on the Jewish world to that of Luther's translation on the Christian world.<sup>145</sup>

In addition to its role in the growth of the enlightenment among European Jews, the position of the *Bi'ur* as a commentary and a translation was so secure and revered among the German Maskilim that they hesitated to attempt to replace it with a newer or updated version. Sandler suggests that this explains why the next Jews to produce commentaries were Italians, who were not dependent on the German translation, specifically Samuel David Luzzatto (1800-1865) and Isacco Samuel Reggio (1784-1855). Seventy years after the *Bi'ur* appeared, Luzzato wrote in a letter that, in addition to other factors, since European Jews were quite familiar with European languages; the *Bi'ur* was outdated and a new commentary was needed to fit the times.<sup>146</sup> The *Bi'ur* began to decline in importance in the East by the ninth decade of the nineteenth century, according to the changing needs of growing Jewish nationalism and its accompanying Hebrew renaissance.

In conclusion, Mendelssohn's *Bi'ur* occupies a key location between the medieval and modern Jewish world, as did Mendelssohn himself. Unlike his philosophy, which has not held up well in the passing of time and under the scrutiny of scholars, the *Bi'ur* shows Mendelssohn to be one of the great scholars, translators, and exegetes of the Jewish people. This is a monumental work, combining the best

of traditional Jewish scholarship with the nascent scientific study of the Bible, and deserves greater recognition among present students of Hebrew literature and rabbinics.

## Notes

1. This reflects the contents of the book, which is basically a collection of sacerdotal law.
2. The Talmudic name for the book, referring to the taking of the census.
3. A play on words between "scribes" (*soferim*) and "counted" (*safru*).
4. These are the five Hebrew letters which have a final form, used at the end of a word.
5. *Ish* and *ishah* are from different roots. See the comment on "WOMAN," p. 190.
6. *Yaqrū* (weighty) and *re'ekha* (thoughts) are Aramaisms.
7. "R. Shimon b. Gamaliel says that books [of Scripture] are also permitted to be written only in Greek."
8. This is not found in the *Pesiqta derav Kahana*; it is in *Midrash Tehilim*, ed. Buber, 9:84.
9. "...or repeats the Mishna without a melody, of him Scripture says 'Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good...' (Ezek. 20:25)"
10. This reflects a conservative position, Levita had shown that the points were unknown to the sages of the Talmud.
11. A printing error: the word *hu* is repeated.
12. The text has "4:22;" it is possible that Mendelssohn's Bible text was numbered differently.
13. Rashi translated the Aramaic into common language.
14. Instead of "chapter seven" (*peh"zayin*) read "sixteen" (*tet"zayin*).
15. Instead of "page eighty-one" (*daf peh-alef*), read

"chapter one" (*peh"alef=pereq alef*).

16. This is an addition found in early manuscripts and the first printed editions. See *Perushei Hatorah Lerabenu Moshe ben Naḥman*, ed. Charles Chavel, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1959), 2:407.

17. Mendelssohn incorrectly calls the work *Masoret HaMasorah*.

18. Actually 37b.

19. Mendelssohn's reference to Kabbalah is surprising for an Enlightener.

20. We were unable to establish the identity of this work.

21. See Christian D. Ginsburg, *The Masoreth Ha-Masoreth of Elias Levita*, (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1867) p. 122, n. 80.

22. Onkelos, Ex. 33:3, "...I will not remove my presence from your midst..." and Num. 24:1, "He went, as at other times, only to look for omens."

23. These changes are made for the following reasons: Gen. 1:26, to prevent the notion of Two Powers being read into the text; Gen. 2:2, lest it be implied that God worked on the seventh day; Gen. 5:2, it might be said that they were separate from the beginning; Gen. 11:7, Two Powers; Gen. 18:12, to make a distinction between Sarah and Abraham, who laughed inwardly; Gen. 49:6, to save the name of Jacob's sons; Ex. 4:20, to preserve Moses' dignity; Ex. 12:40, "in other lands" is added because the stay in Egypt was, at most, 210 years; Ex. 24:5 and 11, "elect" is more suitable to the context; Num. 16:15, "valuable" is more dignified than "ass;" Deut. 4:19, "to give light" is inserted to avoid misunderstanding; Deut. 17:3, "to serve them" is inserted to guard against misunderstanding.

24. This last sentence is a paraphrase, not a direct quote.

25. Mendelssohn spells it *Abuhav*.

26. The prospectus *'Aliḥ Litrufah* was printed by Proops.

27. Mendelssohn uses the term *leshon ashkenaz*.

28. Levita never translated the Torah. The work mentioned was done by Michael Adam. See W. Staerk and A. Leitzman, *Die Jüdisch-Deutschen Bibelübersetzungen* (Frankfort a. M.: J. Kauffmann Verlag, 1923), pp. 114-115.

29. This is an example of Mendelssohn's opposition to biblical criticism.

30. Mendelssohn's older son died in 1765.

31. Probably Mendelssohn's older brother. See Alexander Altman, *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study* (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1973), p. 8.

32. A list of subscribers is found at the end of the introduction.

33. Mendelssohn refers to his commentary on *Qohelet*, published in Berlin in 1770.

34. *Tagim* are the crowns found on certain letters in a Torah scroll; *Ga'ya* (also called *Meteg*) is a short vertical stroke underneath a word. In an open paragraph, the word beginning the new paragraph must begin on a new line; a closed paragraph begins on the same line upon which the previous paragraph ended, separated by a space.

35. This work was printed, unfinished (it ends abruptly at the end of a page), in the first edition of the *Bi'ur*.

36. See below p. 261.

37. E.g. *Divrei Shalom ve'emet* (Berlin 1782) and *Tiferet Ruah Hen* (Berlin 1780).

38. The introduction was written after the work was completed.

39. See below p. 262.

40. The musical accents in Job, Proverbs and Psalms are different than in the rest of the Bible.

41. This is in the third part of the introduction.

42. Mendelssohn assumes that the roots are *shin-het-he*

and *alef-ḥet-he*, respectively.

43. See the comment on "AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD," p. 106.

44. Mendelssohn has "v. 3."

45. The conjunctive *waw* is not always translated as *und*.

46. Mendelssohn considers the meaning of rabbinic Hebrew together with biblical Hebrew, a rare practice among Haskalah writers.

47. For *banah* the text mistakenly has *qanah*.

48. Mendelssohn refers to the Rashi manuscript mentioned in the introduction. See p. 95.

49. An example of Mendelssohn's interest in *realia*, see below p. 273.

50. In the first edition, an extraneous final *nun* is printed at this point. It has been removed from later editions.

51. Cf. b. B. Bat. 73b, e.g. "Rabbah said: I saw an antelope, one day old, that was as big as Mount Tabor."

52. No corresponding remark is made about the word *shelishi* (v. 13). Both are always written full, unlike *shishi*.

53. According to Gesenius (paragraph 90-o), this is probably the remnant of an archaic case ending.

54. This is part of Mendelssohn's credo as an Enlightener.

55. "*Da vollendet waren die Himmel...*"

56. Because heaven and earth are enumerated.

57. *Ba'at* is misprinted here for *ba'ah*.

58. Mendelssohn seems to indicate a *he*.

59. In the following he states his opposition to

biblical criticism.

60. The text has *we'iy*" as an abbreviation. We think this should be *wera'iy*" (an abbreviation for *wera'iti*, as in Rashi), but it could be an abbreviation of *we'it*" ("there are"). The 1831 edition is unchanged.

61. This is actually found in Hul. 60b.

62. The text has *ya'alu*, a misprint.

63. Mendelssohn does not translate it that way.

64. See both Onkelos and Nachmanides to this verse.

65. There is no such essay, since Mendelssohn did not finish the commentary to Genesis himself.

66. This is an archaic or dialectic form of *Rippe*.

67. See p. 11. That the language of creation was Hebrew is a pious attestation. Mendelssohn's (correct) opinion here contradicts his earlier statement.

68. In the translation "*Da hörten sie die Stimme das ewigen Wesens Gottes wandelnd...*" The last word can indeed refer to *sie* (i.e. Adam or Eve) or to *die Stimme*.

69. Onkelos: "I will make enmity between you and the woman and between your son and her son. He will remember what you did to her in days of old and you will watch for him at the end."

70. I.e. after death.

71. Mendelssohn obviously does not identify the medial *shwa*; it is first named by Ewald.

72. Mendelssohn criticizes the Rashi text: *Kadavar* must be a misprint of *Kazakhar*.

73. Nachmanides has "killed," *haragta*.

74. The text has "Jubal."

75. See n. 48.

76. I.e., even though she was fashioned from the rib.

77. In his translation, Mendelssohn uses the word *Mensch* in parenthesis.

78. Joseph is sighted from afar.

79. "'This is my God and I will glorify Him.' R. Eliezer says: Where can you say that a maidservant saw at the sea what Isaiah and Ezekial and all the prophets never saw? It says about them, '...and through the ministry of prophets I gave you parables.' (Hosea 12:11)" *Mekilta*. ed. Lauterbach, II, 24.

80. Perets Sandler, *Habi'ur latorah shel Moshe Mendelssohn Uesi'ato* (Jerusalem: R. Mass, 1940), pp. 87-89.

81. See Altman, *Mendelssohn*, pp. 369-372; Henry Englander, "Mendelssohn as Translator and Exegete," *Hebrew Union Colloge Annual* VI (1929):330-331; Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, 6 vols., trans. and ed. by Bella Löwy, et. al. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1898) 5:328-329; Joseph Klausner, *Historiah shel Hasifrut Ha'ivrit Hahadashah*, 6 vols., (Jerusalem, Ahiasaf Publishing Inc., 1957-1959) 1:64-67; Michael Meyer, *The Origins of the Modern Jew* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), pp. 43-45; Sandler, *Bi'ur*, pp. 11-15; Meyer Waxman, *A History of Jewish Literature*, 4 vols. (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1936) 3:72-73; Werner Weinberg, "Mendelssohn's 'Biur,' Two Hundred Years Later," *Jewish Book Annual* 40 (1982-1982):98-100; Israel Zinberg, *Toldot Sifrut Yisrael*, 6 vols. (Merhavia, Israel: Sifriyat Po'alim, 1959-1960), 5:32-34.

82. See p. 89 above.

83. See Weinberg, "Mendelssohn's 'Biur'," p. 100.

84. Altman, *Mendelssohn*, p. 369.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 377.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 373.

87. See pp. 97-98 above.

88. Weinberg, "Mendelssohn's 'Biur'," p. 102.

89. See pp. 98-100 above.

90. For a full treatment of this, see Altman, *Mendelssohn*, pp. 405-420.

91. See p. 92 above.

92. For a full treatment of this, see Altman, *Mendelssohn*, pp. 390-398, and Sandler *Bi'ur*, pp. 194-218.

93. Edward R. Levenson, "Moses Mendelssohn's Understanding of Logico-grammatical and Literary Construction in the Pentateuch: A Study of His German Translation and Hebrew Commentary (The *Biur*)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1972), p. 3.

94. Weinberg, "Mendelssohn's '*Biur*'," p. 102.

95. A good review of the literature is found in Levenson, "Understanding," pp. 1-7.

96. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

97. Englander, "Translator," pp. 327.

98. Sandler, *Bi'ur*, p. 34.

99. See pp. 40-43 above.

100. See p. 43 above.

101. See p. 47 above.

102. See pp. 22-38 above.

103. Sandler, *Bi'ur*, p. 38.

104. See pp. 86 above.

105. Sandler, *Bi'ur*, p. 37.

106. See p. 54 above.

107. See p. 64 above, and Sandler, *Bi'ur*, p. 38.

108. See pp. 65-66 above.

109. See p. 68 above, and Sandler, *Bi'ur*, p. 39.

110. See p. 69 above.

111. Sandler, *Bi'ur*, p. 39.
112. See p. 74 above.
113. See n. 28 above.
114. See p. 85 above.
115. Sandler, *Bi'ur*, p. 41.
116. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
117. *Ibid.*
118. *Ibid.*
119. *Ibid.*
120. *Ibid.*, p. 100, and see p. 162 above.
121. See p. 172 above.
122. See p. 233 above.
123. Sandler, *Bi'ur*, pp. 102-103.
124. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
125. See p. 152 above.
126. Sandler, *Bi'ur*, p. 103, and see p. 154-155.

127. It should be noted that Englander concentrated on Mendelssohn's commentary on Qohelet and Exodus, and not on Genesis, although it can be assumed that his opinion of this part of Mendelssohn's work is the same.

128. Englander, "Translator," p. 332.
129. *Ibid.*, p. 334.
130. *Ibid.*, p. 347.
131. *Ibid.*, p. 348.
132. See p. 234-238 above.

133. Sandler, *Bi'ur*, p. 76.
134. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
135. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
136. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
137. See e.g. pp. 111, 196, and 219 above.
138. See p. 219 above.
139. See p. 181 above.
140. See pp. 206-207 above.
141. Englander, "Translator," p. 328.
142. *Ibid.*
143. Klausner, *Historiah*, 1:64.
144. Waxman, *History*, 3:73-74.
145. Sandler, *Bi'ur*, pp. 219-226.
146. *Ibid.*, pp. 226-227.

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