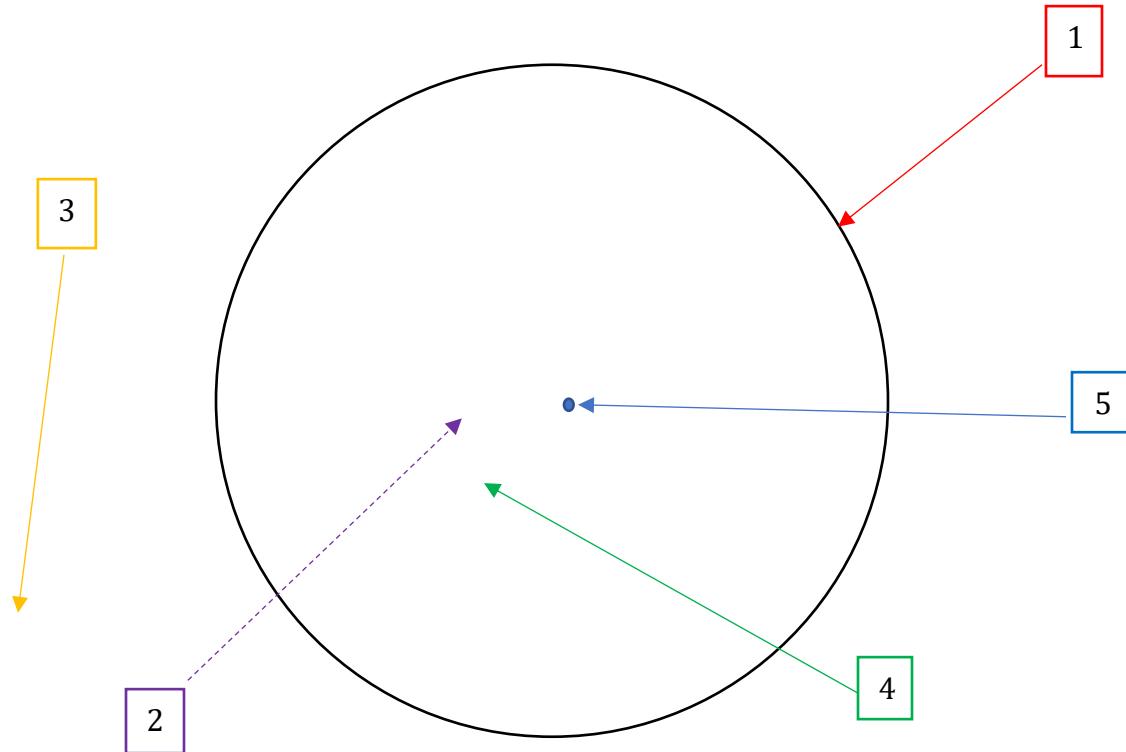


## Ibn Ezra's Five Ways

In the general introduction to his Torah Commentary (standard/short), Ibn Ezra introduces five methodologies (דרכים) of scriptural exegesis, four of which he considers mistaken (to different degrees), and the fifth of which he describes as his own preferred method; these are expanded upon somewhat in his later Introduction to the Torah Commentary (alternate/long). Ibn Ezra uses the metaphor of a circle to describe the relative proximity of the five ways to the most correct understanding of the text. The center point of the circle represents the correct understanding.



1. **דרך האחת ארוכה ורחבת...**ובה דרכו גדולים, והמה חכמי היישובות במלכות ישמעהלים

**The way of the geonim** – endlessly circling around the bounding line of the circle, as far from the center as possible while being part of the circle

2. **הדרך הב'...דרך הצדוקים**

**The way of Karaites** – they believe themselves to be at the center

3. **הדרך הג' דרך חשך ואפלת...**והם הבודאים מלבים לכל הדברים סודות, ואמונתם כי התורות והמשפטים HIDOT

**The way of allegory** and figurative language (as used by Christians) – these interpreters are outside of the circle

4. **הדרך הרביעית... זאת דרך החכמים, בארץות יונים ואדומים**

**The way of midrash** as used by exegetes in Christian Europe – they are close to the center, much closer than the first three;

5. **הדרך החמישית...הישראל בעיני...אחפש היטב דקזוק כל מלה בכל מאי, ואחר כך אפרשנה כפי אשר תשיג ידי... רק קדמונינו...כל דבריהם אמת**

**The way of peshat** – at the center point of the circle; the correct method of understanding Tanakh, without contradicting rabbinic tradition