

Alef.

1. In his interpretation of 1:26, RaShI suggests that man does have a “mold” that is unique to him, but a mold nevertheless. In v. 27, RaShI similarly states there is a “mold” for man per se, but also a very specific way of bringing him into existence, i.e., that God Uses “His Hands” when “Handling the mold” as opposed to activating the mold via a verbal Command, as in the case of other creatures. Perhaps RaShI interprets differently in each of these verses because whereas in v. 26, “KiDemuteinu” modifies “BeTzalmeinu” suggesting that there is both a form and that this form represents in some way God’s “Form”, v. 27 only uses the term “BeTzalmo” which is further clarified as “BeTzelem Elokim”. In order for the final phrase in the verse, “BeTzelem Elokim Bara Oto” to convey additional meaning beyond what has been already imparted in v. 26, something new has to be derived. The new information is that in addition to a mold for man, God Brings him into being in a unique manner, i.e., by Using “His Hands.”
2. “B” in v. 26: in accordance with.  
“B” in v. 27: by means of (by means of His Being, directly rather than merely verbally, He Brought man into existence.)
3. When the craftsperson uses their hands, there is more personal involvement and investment in each product than when the objects are turned out mechanically via the use of a mold. There is also the possibility of unique individual characteristics being added by the craftsperson due to his personal involvement. If the products are molded on an assembly line, there is a greater expectation that each will be identical with the next.
4. In Tehillim 139:5, the context is not the Creation of man, but rather God’s Involvement in his everyday actions and thoughts—e.g.,

תהלים פרק קלט  
(ב) אתה ידעת שבתי וקומי בנתה לרעי מרחוק:  
(ג) ארחי ורבעי זרית וכל דרכי הסכנתה:  
(ד) כי אין מלה בלשוני הן יקוק ידעת כלה:  
(ה) אחור וקדם צרתי ותשת עלי כפכה:

Consequently, while if taken out of context, the phrase could contribute to RaShI’s conception of the specific nature by which God Created man, it would not make sense of RaShI to have made such a comment in his interpretation of the verse in Tehillim in a similar manner.

Another reason for RaShI not commenting in Tehillim per se is that the part of the hand that would be used for creating an object are the fingers rather than the palm. The palm is more likely to be used in the context of protecting, covering an object, which fits more consistently with the context of Tehillim 139.

5. The difference between “Demut” and “Tzelem” would appear to be that whereas the former is something concrete and tangible, a concept that is very much part of the world perceived and inhabited by humans, the latter is much more esoteric and abstract when talking about something’s essence. (While the word “Tzelem” is associated with “Tzel” which connotes

one's shadow, it seems to suggest not simply an area of shade that is projected by an object vis-à-vis the overhead sun, but rather something that is similar to but only a secondary representation of the original entity's essence. A contrast with Socrates' Allegory of the Cave (<http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/allegory.html>) comes to mind where most people can only see shadows of reality and it is the philosopher who breaks free and can see the actual three-dimensional object in all of its colorful fullness. Yet since God by definition has no physical form, even the "philosopher"—the closest thing in Jewish tradition is the Revelation experienced by Moshe—would be able to only see some sort of imprecise representation of God's Essence, if even that. It is this abstraction of an Abstraction that "Tzelem", as opposed to "Demut", may be referring.) Consequently, whenever the text may be referring to physical form rather than inherent essence, RaShI throws in the word "Diyoken" or "Demut".

Beit.

1. The questions addressed by the commentaries in addition to the meaning of anthropomorphic representations of the Divine:
  - a. What is added by "KiDemutainu" beyond "BeTzalmeinu"? (R. Saadia, Bechor Shor, ShaDaL)
  - b. What is the connotation of the "Beit" of "BeTzalmeinu"? (RaDaK, ShaDaL, Meshech Chachma)
  - c. What is implied by the verb "VaYibra" in contrast to "VaYitzer" and/or "VaYa'as"? (RaDaK)
  - d. Why does it seem that these verses deal with the creation of the Nefesh rather than the body? (RaDaK)
  - e. What is the unique meaning of "Tzelem" in contrast to "To'ar" and/or "Tavnit" (ShaDaL)
  - f. If Tzelem Elokim is defined as the ability to make free choices, how is this possible in light of God's Omniscience? (Meshech Chachma)
2. All of the listed commentaries agree that "Tzelem Elokim" is a non-physical quality. However the interpretations that they suggest vary, and include:
  - a. The ability to rule, dominate (R. Saadia, Bechor Shor)
  - b. Intelligence (RaDaK)
  - c. A unique attribute of God, specifically that like God, man contains many different powers and abilities rather than single ones like the rest of the Creation (ShaDaL)
  - d. Free choice (Meshech Chachma)
3. RaDaK on "BeTzalmeinu":
  - a. By means of (Our Intelligence)
  - b. In possession of (Our Intelligence)

It would appear that RaDaK is agreeing with RaShI's second interpretation (see Alef 2. above.)
4. The relationship between the words "BeTzalmeinu" and "KiDemuteinu":
  - a. R. Saadia

“BeTzalmeinu”—the general framework; “KiDemuteinu”—the specific quality, i.e., the ability to exert authority over the rest of Creation. The relationship is one of Kellal U’Perat (going from the general to the specific, and according to the 13 hermeneutic principles of R. Yishmael, the Perat delimits the Kellal to the more limited range of the specific, i.e., Ein BeChelal Elah Mah SheYeish BePherat .)

b. ShaDaL

In this instance the Kellal U’Perat is giving man some quality that resembles God, that quality being a collection of many different powers and abilities, rather than a concentration of very specific abilities and in limited number.

c. Meshech Chachma

Let us make man (“BeTzalmeinu) by contracting Our Omniscience, thereby providing for the possibility of man being endowed (“KiDemuteinu”) with unfettered free choice.

5. The following verse:

תהלים פרק ח  
(ז) תמשיליהו במעשי ידיך כל שתה תחת רגליו:

referring to man, would appear to emphasize the quality that R. Saadia and Bechor Shor highlighted, i.e., man’s ability to rule and control other parts of the Creation.

6. The verse in Beraishit 9:

בראשית פרק ט  
(ו) שפך דם האדם באדם דמו ישפך כי בצלם אלקים עשה את האדם:  
would appear to support RaDaK who interprets “Tzelem Elokim” as the Nefesh. When this is connected with the verse:

דברים פרק יב  
(כג) רק חזק לבלתי אכל הדם כי הדם הוא הנפש ולא תאכל הנפש עם הבשר:  
then one can understand how the taking of human life is not only a matter of destroying the physical presence of the animate being, as in the case of an animal, where I can separate the body from the blood, but also the destruction of the person’s soul, rendering taking human life so much more serious than taking animal life.