

Moses Cordovero. Pardes Rimmonim (The Orchard of Pomegranates)

Provisional working translation by Stephan Claassen, 2025

Gate 1. Chapter 5.

After we have travelled from the mountain of HaShem, a high and steep mountain, [which is] the previous mishna [of Sefer Yetsirah], and with it we were compelled to [accept] the opinion of the kabbalists [namely that] the number of the Sefirot is ten and not more. We will [now] go “to the mountain of myrrh” [Song of Songs 4:6], the second mishna after it, although it is the fourth one from the start of the chapter. And this is what it says: ‘Ten Sefirot without what[-ness]. Ten and not nine. Ten and not eleven. Understand with wisdom/Chochmah, and become wise with understanding/Binah. Examine with them and investigate from them, and know and think/count of them, and establish the matter completely, and return the Formator to His foundation.’ [Sefer Yetsirah I.4] – End of citation.

We have agreed not to arouse on this mishna a general principle, its words being by themselves without arrangement, and the citation says: “Explain me!”. And its shallowness does not tolerate a general principle instead of what is raised and given in it, and we will write what God will place in our mouth on the subject. ‘Ten and not nine’, and its explanation.

And it is that its intention is to warn us for the mistake, so that we will not say that Keter does not belong to the Sefirot that we can think, as it is En Sof - which it is not -, as it [En Sof] is dwelling above the above. And [it is] not as many think, that En Sof would be among the number of the Sefirot, and that it would be Keter. And this thought we will invalidate in the Gate of Is En Sof Keter? [Gate III], with help and support from HaShem. And ‘may the all-Merciful save us from this opinion!’ [Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 84b]. But verily they are ten besides the Emanator. Because if this was not so, the emanated Sefirot would be found to be nine. And this is not appropriate, but the emanated [Sefirot] are in reality ‘ten and not nine’. Further an explanation that came to warn us so that we would not err to exclude Malkut from the number [of the Sefirot], as there are some who believe in an opinion close to this. And ‘may the all-Merciful save us’ likewise ‘from this opinion!’ But it [= Malkut] is together with them in the Emanation/[the world of Atsilut]. And even though it is not in their harmony, as we will explain in the Gate of the Diminution of the Moon [Gate XVIII] with Heaven’s help. And close to this explanation is the explanation of Rashbi, of blessed memory, in the book of the Faithful Shepherd/Raya Mehemna [Zohar III.277b, parasha Ki Teitzei], and this is what it says: ‘And there are other masters of the secrets of the Torah, masters of the Attributes, who inherit souls from the side of Holy Malkut, which is totalized of ten Sefirot. Because everyone who inherits and merits it [such a soul from the side of Malkut], merits the ten Sefirot without separation, “ten and not nine”, since if they would be inheriting only Malkut, there would be nine [Sefirot] in separation from it, and because there is no separation there, the author of Sefer Yetsirah says: “ten and not nine”. And if you say that it[s number] rises above ten, see, the Explicit Name ו"א ה"א ו"ד ה"א [the Tetragram in its principal miluy, using the letter א, sign of unity] consists of] ten [letters], ו"ד/Yud [ten] which is united with it [= Malkut] does not rise above ten, and because of this “ten and not eleven”. End of citation.

The intention of this saying, that he says: 'and there are others' [is] that higher than this subject he said [that] there are among the people of action those who have a soul which is a Mother from the side of [the world of] Beriah/Creation, and this subject will be explained in the Gate of the Soul [Gate XXXI] with help of HaShem. And now he says that there are 'other masters of the secrets of the Torah', which are those who are occupied with the divine Torah and its secrets. And because it is possible to say that one calls 'masters of the secrets of the Torah' those who are occupied with the secrets of halachot, exegeses, aggadot, rules, judgements and punishments, according to only the simple meaning [Peshat] of their words. And hereto he says that if the salary of these is double and [again] doubled and this [salary] is [then] the representative degree. Nevertheless they are not worthy of the height of this soul until they arrive at the secrets of the Sefirot which are the mystery of Divinity. And these [last ones] are called 'masters of attributes'. And they are called thus by reason of [the fact that] all occupation of the sages in Kabbalah is in the attributes and their subjects. And he says that these inherit a soul from the side of Malkut itself, not from the side of Metatron [the] servant [of the Master]. And not from the side of the Mother as has been mentioned there. And he says that he inherits a soul totalized out of ten. And [he says this] because there is [apparently] a difficulty for him: perhaps the other soul also might be thus totalized out of ten, or perhaps this soul [from Malkut] might not be totalized out of ten?

And from where do we have the ability to divide between one soul and the other, even when this soul will be more important than that one? And to this he will force, as with Malkut he intended to say that it is 'from the side of [...] Malkut' [and that] it [= the soul] is [then] by necessity totalized out of ten. By reason that the Sefirot will not be separated and they are connected and united, and when we mention Malkut, the remaining Sefirot are necessarily attached to it. What is not the case with the soul from the side of Metatron or Mother as they are from the world of division [from lower worlds: Mother is in the world of Beriah/Creation, and Metatron in the world of Yetzirah/Formation], since they descend from [the world of] Atsilut/Emanation. And it is not obliged by this obligation except in [the world of] Atsilut, but not in them [= the other worlds]. And because of this a soul will not be totalized out of ten unless [it is] from the side of Malkut. And when we say that the soul [is] from the side of Metatron or Mother, [and that] it is not totalized out of ten, it is not the intention that in it [= the soul] are not totalized ten according to its meaning, as it is not possible that a proceeding action from above is not totalized out of all ten. Because if [this would be] so, one would see [the world of] division.

And this is exactly the reason [concerning] those who have defects, such as those lacking hands, and it seems as if they are defective and reveal the vice of their actions, that they have made a holy place unfit and have separated [it] and therefore their soul does not extend in the body into these limbs, and this is its defect and its lack, and everything [follows the principle of] according to the place of their violation, similarly so their defect. And the defect, that [starts] from the beginning of [the world of] Creation/Beriah [downward], shows its deficiency in the turn of the Gilgul/cycle of souls, as we will explain the subject of the limbs in the Gate of the Soul [Gate XXXI] in chapter 7 with help of HaShem.

And never in the world it is possible [that there is] a soul or an activity in which not all ten Sefirot are totalized. And even when it is decided saying [that] a soul is from the side of Metatron, or from the side of Mother, its intention is not [to say] that they are not from above, God forbid. Because all the souls are proceeding from above. And the subject [is] as we will explain in the mentioned Gate [of the Soul, Gate XXXI] in chapter two, with help and support of HaShem. And always it is totalized out of ten, and they are never separated, as we have explained.

And what is [the difference] between souls from Malkut and the other souls? It is that the other souls are [also] totalized out of ten, [yet] that the ten does not show itself concretely in these, but the intention is that they are totalized in it, and it is in itself totalized out of ten. But the soul from the side of Malkut is being emanated from the ten Sefirot which are in Malkut, with Malkut showing in it [the soul] all ten Sefirot and unites itself with them.

And this subject will be clarified further in the Gates that will follow with help of Hashem. And this subject [is] on the Sefirot themselves as there is a big difference between our saying that 'Malkut is totalized out of ten' [on the one hand], and [on the other hand] when we say that it is in unity with the essence of the other Sefirot, because it is not the same matter. Because the advantage of the Sefira when it is totalized is not [the same] as when it is being improved by uniting itself with the essence of the Sefirot, as this [last] is when [the] Sefirot will reveal themselves in it in reality, and this is being explained. And this is when in his saying [it says] 'totalized out of ten Sefirot'. And the explanation: as the intention in his saying 'totalized' is not just [being] totalized according to the nature of the Sefirot but 'as ... who inherits it ... merits the ten Sefirot without separation'. Explanation: he is himself worthy of the ten Sefirot in their reality by means of the ten Sefirot revealing themselves actually in it, as we have explained.

And [on] the subject of his saying 'who inherits it and merits it'. Explanation: that there are two matters which are needed in order to merit this important soul. The first one from the side of his preparation from the side of his father at the moment of procreation at the moment of conception, as our Sages of blessed memory have said: '... he who sanctifies himself at the moment of sexual intercourse etc.' [Babylonian Talmud, Shevuot 18b], and after his father has sanctified himself herewith, when this his very good intention will go up, he will merit a holy soul from a lofty place, and according to the measure of his holiness thus his conduction will rise up. And this is well-known in the Zohar and in the Talmud many times in many places.

And [in] their saying: meriting worthy sons, the intention is that he does extend to his sons a soul from a high place regarding that they will be worthy. And this is called an inheritance from his father, and this he intends in his saying 'and he inherits (it)'.

Further secondly he needs in himself worthy deeds pleasant in the eye of his Creator, so that this soul will not depart from him, and this will be explained further in the Gate of the Soul [Gate XXXI] chapter 3, with help of HaShem.

And on this second [matter] he says: 'and he merits it', explanation: he that merits with his deeds this holy soul. 'he merits the ten Sefirot without separation'. Explanation: as we have

explained that as the soul [is] from the substance of Malkut, see it necessarily follows that this soul is 'totalized out of the Sefirot', explanation: from the substance of the ten Sefirot that are in it [=Malkut], because it unifies itself with the ten Sefirot and it is in no way separated from them. And this is what he says: 'merits the ten Sefirot without separation', he intends to say: [these are] unified in Malkut without being separated from it. And this necessarily follows from the words of Sefer Yetzirah which says 'ten and not nine'.

And when it would have been possible to say that the soul, which is necessarily a part from Malkut, could be separated, as its expression: "and blew into his mouth" (Genesis 2:7), everyone who blows, is blowing from his substance, and if this is so, the way of the part will be precious to the whole, because as the soul that is being emanated out of it [= Malkut] is being separated from the other parts of the Sefirot, similarly Malkut is being separated, God forbid, from the other Sefirot. And this is not possible, because if it would be so, the left over Sefirot would be nine, to this it [Sefer Yetzirah] said: 'ten and not nine', that there will never be less than ten, and therefore it is necessary that the soul is being totalized out of ten, and that the Sefirot are totalized in it [= the soul] substantially, just as it is [the case with] Malkut itself, as everything that is in the part, is [also] in the whole.

'And if you say that it rises above etc.' Explanation: there is a difficulty for him [in] that it is said that they are ten besides Malkut, and according to this it was already possible to say that Malkut is being separated from the rest, and nevertheless they [all] are ten. And to this he brings in: 'the explicit name etc.' Explanation: the Explicit Name is a name of four [letters], as we will explain in the Gate of the Four-letter Name [Gate XIX], and this name is in the attribute of Tif'eret, and it [= the name] is the masculine uniting itself with Malkut, who is the feminine, and it [= Tif'eret] is uniting itself with her [= Malkut]. And this name teaches with its full form (miluy) that is the Domain of the Unique [indicated by the letter א, thus applying the miluy form with א], [that] its height [is] ten and its width four, which is יה"ה and this is its width, and its height is ten: א"ה וא"ה"א , see [there are] ten [letters], as it never rises above ten. And if it would be that there were ten besides Malkut, see, when the name has united itself with Malkut, there will be eleven: ten above, and one uniting itself with the feminine [and this is not possible] To this it says in Sefer Yetzirah: 'ten and not eleven'.

And see, we have completed the explanation of the passage [from the Zohar], and we have written intentionally an explanation of the mishna 'ten and not nine, ten and not eleven'. We will further be able to explain 'ten and not eleven', [so as that] it intends to warn us against bringing into the number of the emanated entities [= the ten Sefirot] the throne that is designated to the [world of] Beriah/Creation as will be explained in the Gate of the Four Worlds [Gate XVI] with help of HaShem. And similarly it intends to warn us against bringing into the number of the emanated entities the king, prince of faces, Metatron, as although his name is as the name of his Master, he is only [of the world of] Yetzirah and not [of that of] Atsilut, as we will explain in the aforementioned Gate with help of HaShem. And all these explanations are in the explanation of the mishna, since it speaks in terms of affirmation and negation: 'ten', see [it is] an affirmation, 'and not nine', see [it is] a negation, and similarly 'ten and not eleven'. And its intention is to necessitate this number, that it is ten, and to negate all that is of the side of error, which would add to the [number] ten or would diminish it.

