

Moses Cordovero. Pardes Rimmonim (The Orchard of Pomegranates)

Provisional working translation by Stephan Claassen, 2025

Gate 1. Chapter 8.

After we have been confirmed on the subject of the number of Sefirot, it is proper that we will explore if they are necessary from the side of philosophy or not. And to this we will say that they are necessary because of several reasons. The first one [is] since we are believing in [divine] providence, and even in individual providence, we are obliged to say that He is watching over [creation] from the side of the Sefirot, because the simple [=undivided] one, reason of all reasons and the cause of all causes, is removed from [any] change and from [any] attributes. It wants to say: wise, righteous, listening, and the rest of the attributes that the philosophers remove from Him. And similarly restrictions of the body and of corporeality, as for example “*And HaShem descended...*” [Genesis 11:5], and similarly “*And the appearance of the glory of HaShem [was] as a consuming fire...*” [Exodus 24:17], and similarly “*and I saw HaShem sitting on a throne...*” [Isaiah 6:1], and similarly “*And the glory of HaShem filled the tabernacle*” [Exodus 40:34], and similarly “*and they saw the God of Israel and under his feet...*” [Exodus 24:10], and similarly what is said in Daniel (7:9) “*and the Ancient of Days sat, his garment white as snow*”, and similarly the writings on the finger of God [Exodus 31:18], the ears of HaShem [Exodus 11:18], the hand of HaShem [Exodus 7:5], the eyes of HaShem [Exodus 15:5], as these subjects, which have entered into Scripture, are instructing about the boundary and about the corporeality, and similarly about the attributes.

And this, on the simple one regarding the aspect of its essence and its simpleness, it is not possible to say such about this [one], except when we regard the aspect of its attributes, as will be explained in the Gate of the Essence and the Vessels [Gate IV] and in the Gate of the Denominations [Gate XXII], with help of God.

And see by means of the attributes, there will be changes and Judgement/Din and Compassion/Rachamim, not in its aspect itself, as will be explained in the mentioned Gate.

And see because of this aspect, in order that we will not deny the roots of our faith in the simple one[-ness], in the reality of its simplicity that it is removed from the attributes that imply the body and corporeality, and we are compelled to believe in Providence which is also itself [belonging] to the roots of [our] faith, and therefore it is necessary for us to believe in the Sefirot, so that not some roots of our faith would be contradicting others, as we have explained. And this is the reason or are the reasons compelling believing the Sefirot and they are proofs forced partly because of the Torah by way of philosophy.

Truly by way of philosophy, apart from support and influence [for the Sefirot] from the Torah, the commentators have further written down many proofs, but as our way is not in this philosophy, we will not copy them [here] at all.

Further, these attributes have been explained [as] ten, their mystery and their subject [are found] in scripture. The three first ones are explained in the words of Job to his friends, as he says (Job 28:12): “*And Chochmah/Wisdom from where/מאי is it found, and this one/זוהי [is]*

the place of Binah/Understanding” In this verse he explains the order of the three first [Sefirot] which are called There Is Not/אין, Chochmah, Binah. The first one, he says that Chochmah/Wisdom is emanated from the first Sefira which is called There Is Not/אין [=Keter], and this is [when he says] “*And Chochmah/Wisdom from There Is Not/אין it is found*”. And א which consists of א [which is] א/There Is Not, and י [which is] Chochmah, and “this”/זה is the “*place of Binah*”, by which Binah is emanated. And truly, from the emanation of There Is Not/אין he does not speak of it at all, as even that which is emanated is called There Is Not/אין, and the more so He who emanates [is called thus].

And see, the seven [Sefirot] which extend from them have been explained in the words of King David of blessed memory in Scripture as is said (I Chronicles 29:11) “*To you (לך), HaShem, is Gedolah/Greatness, and Gevurah/Might, and Tif’eret/Splendor, and Netsach/Triumph, and Hod/Majesty as all (כל) in the heavens and on the earth, to you (לך), HaShem, is the Kingdom...*” The words “*To you, HaShem*”/ לך ה' are a special name for the three first ones, and Binah/Understanding is called “*To you*”/לך as it makes [the numerical value of] 50 as [is] the number of the Fifty Gates of Binah/Understanding. And [as for the words] לך and כל, the letters are the same. And Yesod/Foundation, when it is receiving from Binah, from the Fifty mentioned Gates [of Binah], is called כל/all, and it is as the resemblance of the seal that is turning over from לך to כל, and the reason is that the Fifty Gates are alluded to in the word לך and in the word כל because the Gates are Fifty in the mystery of Binah/Wisdom extending to Hod/Majesty, which are five Sefirot [that is: Gedolah[/Chesed], Gevurah, Tif’eret, Netsach, Hod], and each one [of them] is comprised of ten, see [this makes five times ten is] fifty, and they are three [Sefirot] on two [Sefirot]: Gedolah/Chesed, Gevurah and Tif’eret, they are a [vocalization mark] Segol [consisting of three points: two above, and one below] or a [cantillation mark] Segolta [the inverse of the Segol: one point above, two below], they are ל/30. Netsach and Hod they are a [vocalization mark] Tsere [consisting of two horizontal points] or a [vocalization mark] Shewa [consisting of two vertical points], see [this is] ו/20, see [together] this is לו as their order [from the point of view of Binah]

And [from the point of view of Yesod it is] כל in the mystery of the seal turning over, what was above has returned to below. And the other subjects on the [Fifty] Gates [of Binah] will be explained in the Gate of the Gates [Gate XIII] with help of HaShem. And Gedolah, this is Chesed, and Gevurah, this is Pachad/Fear, and [further there are] Tif’eret and Netsach and Hod.

“*as all (כל) in the heavens and on the earth*”, this [כל] is Yesod, as Targum Onkelos [I did not find this in Targum Onkelos nor in Targum Jonathan] “*which unites between the heavens and the earth*”. Explanation: the one that is uniting Tif’eret, which is called “heavens”, and “earth”, which is called Malkut, and this is Yesod.

And Malkut is not explained properly in the verse, but it says: “*To you, HaShem, [is] the kingdom (הממלכה)*”, because, as for Malkut, its [normal] place is above Netsach and Hod and Yesod, but because of the diminution [of the moon] it descended downwards, therefore it [=the verse] did not want to mention it, except by means of the unification, to teach [us] that its place is in the heavens, but that it [= the place] was cast down from the heavens to earth, and after this it says “*To you, HaShem, [is] the kingdom*”, to explain its virtues and

adornments in itself, and yet it returns and unites it to its upper root by saying “*To you (לך), HaShem, [is] the kingdom*”, “*To you (לך)*” is Binah, as we have explained [above]. “*HaShem [the Tetragram]*” is Tif’eret. “*the kingdom (הממלכה)*” is Malkut according to its meaning. And this is its reality together with its husband [= Tif’eret], two kings sucking from one Crown/Keter.