

Moses Cordovero. Pardes Rimmonim (The Orchard of Pomegranates)

Provisional working translation by Stephan Claassen, 2025

Gate 1. Chapter 4.

Being that in the previous chapter we were compelled out of the [Zohar-]saying mentioned in it [to learn] that it is Tif'eret which is harmonizing between Gedolah[/Chesed] and Hod, and between Gevurah and Netsach, and the subject was a bit strange to [our] hearing ear. We said to compel this discourse further and to explain the matters, to show that they are not far from the intellect and not strange, as the matter is very close to us.

And the subject [is] in what is well-known, that Tif'eret receives from Gedolah[/Chesed] and Gevurah, and influences Netsach and Hod.

And there is no doubt as to that which Tif'eret influences in Hod, that there must in this influx be part of the influx from Gedolah[/Chesed], which Tif'eret received from it, as we have explained, and similarly what Tif'eret influences in Netsach, [that] there must be in this influx part [of the influx] from Gevurah.

And there is no doubt that the influx that is being influenced from Tif'eret in Netsach and Hod with its [=Tif'eret's] mixture, is not really [identical to] what it received from Gedolah and Gevurah. Indeed the middle mixing will be mixed by means of Tif'eret, becoming equal to Gedolah and to Hod, and similarly becoming equal to Netsach and Gevurah, and if this is so, it is found that this harmonizing is to some extent a continuous matter. And at times it happens [concerning] Tif'eret that its root if its receiving needs to be from Judgement/Din of Gevurah, to influence in Netsach for a need in the world for Judgement, for punishment and as what follows in these subjects. Or because it receives the most part from Gevurah, it will influence to Netsach to sweeten Judgement. And similarly at times Tif'eret will receive the most part from the side of Mercy/Chesed, and it will influence to Hod to sweeten Hod. And this intermixture and what follows from it will be explained in the second chapter of the Gate of the Channels [Gate VII], with help of HaShem. And the matters are straightforward for someone who understands and pleasing to the finders of knowledge.

We will further add instruction to this matter and we need [to add] the subject on which all learned ones agree concerning the colours of the Sefirot, that the colour of Netsach is red leaning to white, and the colour of Hod is white leaning to red – thus far its statement.

And see, they explain about Netsach that it is red, inclining to white, explanation: being red from the side of its receiving from the side of strict Judgement of Gevurah by means of Tif'eret the harmonizer, as we have explained, and because of this Judgement it will be red. But from the side of the majority of its sucking from the side of Mercy – as there is its house – its leaning will be towards white, to whiten the redness, to return it to white, and this is “leaning”, as its direction is that its majority is white. And similarly the subject inverted for Hod, because it is white by means of its sucking from Mercy by means of Tif'eret the compromiser and mediator between them. But because the root of its sucking is from the side

of Gevurah – because there is the root of its leaning and its [natural] place – it needs to be leaning to white and harmonizing Compassion to the side of Judgement.

And see, we have found according to this [that] Tif'eret is mediating with its colour, which is whitened and red, between Gedolah and Hod, and between Gevurah and Netsach.

And the subject of these colors will be explained in the Gate of the Colors [Gate X], with help of HaShem. Praise and thanks to the Bestower of good on the guilty ones, Who has rewarded us with all good. To HaShem, and may He give us light to give force to this matter with three reliable witnesses: with the words of the Rashbi of blessed memory, with the opinion of the Kabbalah, and with the words of the learned ones. The general principle of the matters [is that] the places that need harmonizing are 'five opposite five': Chochmah opposite Binah, Gedolah opposite Gevurah, these are two opposite two, Gedolah opposite Hod, Gevurah opposite Netsach, these are two opposite. These are [in total] four opposite four. Furthermore Yesod is harmonizing between Netsach and Hod as will be explained in the Gate of the Harmonizers [Gate IX] in chapter four. This makes 'five opposite five'. In truth, there are only two harmonizers between five and five, which are Yesod and Tif'eret. How? Yesod [harmonizes] between Netsach and Hod, and Tif'eret between Gedolah and Gevurah, between Gedolah and Hod, between Gevurah and Netsach, and between Chochmah and Binah with the reality hidden in the mystery of Da'at as will be explained in the mentioned Gate [Gate IX]. And with this preamble the mishna [Sefer Yetzirah I.3] will be understood [of] which we [are] in its explanation, which says: 'five opposite five', because the truth is that they are five as opposite five and the covenant of unification standing in the middle, as the harmonizers are mediating and directing between the extremities. And the 'word of the tongue' is Tif'eret, and it is called 'word of the tongue' because it is by means of Binah, which is the tongue, that it rises upwards to harmonize between Chochmah and Binah in the mystery of Da'at, as will be explained in the mentioned Gate [Gate IX]. And similarly by means of it [= Binah] it mediates between Gedolah and Gevurah, as we have explained at the end of Chapter 2 [of the present Gate I]. And the 'circumcision of the genitals' is Yesod, the second harmonizer.

And see, with this matter we will settle the subject further and we will answer exactly that which we asked, which was that they are 'five opposite five' and the harmonizer [added makes] them eleven. Because we are not here in [the realm of] the number of the Sefirot, but [in the realm of] the number of the harmonizing, as we have explained, and there is no need to elaborate [on this here].

And see, we have explained this mishna in the version that is most often published in books and commentators. Although the Ramban, of blessed memory, appears to have had a different version [of this mishna in his commentary], nevertheless we will not worry but consent to [the version in] the majority of the books. And when the researcher will look into the [different] versions he will find that this version [= our version] is more accurate, and further that we cannot verify that this commentary is [actually] by the Ramban, based on what is seen in it.