

Pardes Rimonim

Orchard of Pomegranates

Parts 1-4

*Your purchase helps us
to sponsor a new translation*

Pardes Rimonim

Orchard of Pomegranates

Parts 1-4

By Moshe Cordovero

Translated by Elyakim Getz

Integral edition in English, Hebrew, and Aramaic

E-mail: info@everburninglight.org
WWW: <http://www.everburninglight.org>

Publisher: Providence University
First edition, 2007
ISBN: 1-897352-17-4

Copyright © 2007 by Fabrizio Lanza, ULC-ITALIA
For information:
ULC-ITALIA
Via C.A. Colombo 20/F, 34074 Monfalcone (GO)
Tel.: +39-(0)481-412574

All rights reserved for every country. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America.

Index of contents

Index of contents	v
Preface	ix
Author's Introduction	1
Part 1: The First Treatise is called "Ten and not Nine"	3
Chapter 1	3
Chapter 2	8
Chapter 3	15
Chapter 4	21
Chapter 5	24
Chapter 6	29
Chapter 7	35
Chapter 8	39
Chapter 9	41
Chapter 10	45
Part 2: The Second Treatise is "The reason for the emanation (אצילות, <i>Azilut</i>)"	50
Chapter 1	50
Chapter 2	56
Chapter 3	61
Chapter 4	69
Chapter 5	76
Chapter 6	80

Chapter 7	85
Part 3: The Third Treatise is called “Is the Infinite Crown?”	95
Chapter 1	95
Chapter 2	101
Chapter 3	104
Chapter 4	110
Chapter 5	116
Chapter 6	123
Chapter 7	128
Chapter 8	135
Part 4: The Fourth Treatise is called “Substance and vessels”	145
Chapter 1	145
Chapter 2	151
Chapter 3	158
Chapter 4	162
Chapter 5	168
Chapter 6	176
Chapter 7	185
Chapter 8	198
Chapter 9	205
Chapter 10	213
The original text in Hebrew	224
שער א פרק א	224

שער א פרק ב	226
שער א פרק ג	229
שער א פרק ד	231
שער א פרק ה	233
שער א פרק ו	235
שער א פרק ז	238
שער א פרק ח	239
שער א פרק ט	241
שער א פרק י	242
שער ב פרק א	244
שער ב פרק ב	247
שער ב פרק ג	249
שער ב פרק ד	253
שער ב פרק ה	256
שער ב פרק ו	257
שער ב פרק ז	260
שער ג פרק א	264
שער ג פרק ב	267
שער ג פרק ג	268
שער ג פרק ד	270
שער ג פרק ה	273
שער ג פרק ו	276
שער ג פרק ז	278
שער ג פרק ח	281

שער ד פרק א	285
שער ד פרק ב	288
שער ד פרק ג	291
שער ד פרק ד	293
שער ד פרק ה	296
שער ד פרק ו	299
שער ד פרק ז	303
שער ד פרק ח	309
שער ד פרק ט	312
שער ד פרק י	315

Preface

Pardes Rimonim is a classic work of authentic *Kabbalah* penned by the preeminent scholar, Rabbi Moshe Cordevero (Ramak).

A powerful intellect, fertile writer, and gigantic figure in *Kabbalah*, Ramak (circa 1520-1570) distinguished himself first in Talmudic studies while under the tutelage of Rabbi Yosef Caro. However, he began his *Kabbalah* studies at age 20 with Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz, who was both his brother-in-law and composer of **Lecha Dodi**.

In the *Pardes*, Ramak also displays a marked philosophical influence by the Rambam (Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon, i.e. Maimonides), as evidenced in his rational approach to the subject matter, his choice of terminology, and by his great care in the use of language that defends the Divine ‘incorporeality’ of the Deity. Indeed, Ramak’s encyclopedic work in *Kabbalah* heralded the renaissance of kabbalistic genius that emerged after him in Safed.

A comprehensive work collecting the kabbalistic learning of that time, the original Hebrew version of the *Pardes* was a single volume composed of 32 parts and was written in both Hebrew and Aramaic. This present English translation of *Pardes Rimonim* consists of four parts and is divided into treatises, and chapters.

Of the four treatises published in this volume, Ramak designates the first as “Ten and not Nine”. It consists of 10 chapters. Referencing the *Sefer Yezirah* and “those who are involved in the hidden wisdom”, he underlines the agreement that there are only 10 *Sefirot*, thereby establishing at the outset their numerical integrity. Not only are the *Sefirot* 10 in number, but also *Bli Mah*, i.e. without

substance, materiality or physical limits. This is important, for the *Sefirot* are understood as God's attributes; and just as the Deity is incorporeal, without material limitations or boundaries, so too are His attributes – the *Sefirot*.

The second treatise is called “The Reason for the emanation”, consisting of 7 chapters. In chapter 1 of this treatise, Ramak addresses Rabbi Yehudah 'Hayat's critique of Rabbi Azriel's statement – wherein he attempts to establish the number of *Sefirot* as 10, while referring to a *Sefira* as a point and ascribing to it geometrical dimension – that it has “...three dimensions, length, width, and depth; and when you multiply it by itself, three becomes nine, which – together with the space that contains them – make ten”. The basis for Rabbi Yehudah's criticism is that dimension entails quantity; and since a *Sefira* is an attribute of God – Who is without the limits of dimension or quantity – attributing dimension to a *Sefira* implies corporeality in the Deity. Ramak brings further clarity to the issue by explaining that the *Sefirot* have no share in materiality, but rather, after bodies are derived from them, then the “*Sefirot* are their [bodies] roots to which we apply the terms of materiality only by synonym”.

In the third treatise, called “Is the Infinite Crown?”, Ramak speaks to the confusion displayed by some kabbalists who make the Upper Crown (*Keter*) synonymous with the Infinite (*Ein Sof*), and by implication make *Ein Sof* one of the 10 *Sefirot*. Ramak rejects this notion with support drawn from scripture and logic, arguing that the Emanator is essentially distinct from the emanation in that the emanated are subject to the limits of time. He says of the Deity that, “One of the things about the Infinite is that it is impossible that He does not exist. He is the necessary existent Who brought time into existence,

but He is not subject to time”. He also quotes *Yigdal*: “He is first, but there is no beginning to His beginning”. Rather the Infinite is the First of all that that comes after. In this way, Ramak establishes that *Keter* is one among the emanated.

The fourth treatise is entitled “Substance and vessels”, and has 10 chapters that deal with the question of whether the *Sefirot* are ‘co-substantial’ with the Emanator or whether they are merely vessels. He begins essentially with a survey of Rabbi Mena’hem Recanati’s view of the matter, which is, in effect, that the Creator and the *Sefirot* are not co-substantial. Rather, the *Sefirot* are vessels into which “the Creator’s great light” shines, and the influx into them is an emanation. Ramak contrasts this perspective with the view that alleges the co-substantiality of the Deity and the *Sefirot*. For this he cites Rabbi David’s book *Magen David*. Ramak then follows this with a perspective derived from the *Zohar* wherein he maintains, “These *Sefirot* are a higher soul dressing into the ten *Sefirot* called by names that are vessels. In other words, the ten substantial *Sefirot* are the brain and the higher soul of the ten vessels”.

Ramak ends by explaining that the names, attributes, and epithets mirror the actions of the Creator, and are all for the sake of His creatures, for, “**If not for them, why should He be called ‘Merciful’ or ‘Judge’?**” Thus, it is not that the Creator ‘has’ attributes or names. Nonetheless, it is by these attributes that the Creator spreads His influence into the world and thereby governs all its creatures.

Author's Introduction

Thus says Moshe, the son of Ya‘aqov Cordovero. I saw that the days of childhood were a hopless pursuit of desire, until I reached my twentieth birthday. As my beard turned brown, the Creator aroused me as a man awakening from his slumber. I said then to my soul: How long will you be foolish and indulge in drunkenness? How long will you nurture wicked thoughts and forget your Creator? Awake now and call unto your God, visit His gates daily and repair His broken altar. My soul heard the call and answered: I shall rise and go through the streets of the city looking for some remedy. I then heard the voice of the holy angel who descended upon earth, my teacher and master, the divine kabbalist, the wise Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz, who brought me into the sanctuary of His palace and taught me. He said to me: My son, let my words comfort your heart, bend your ear, and listen to the words of the sages. He established me at the gates of wisdom and understanding – sweeter than honey – reaching to the depth of mysteries of the *Torah*. These were like honey to me and I studied diligently with him. He taught me the ways of the *Zohar* and handed me the keys to its gates. I strengthened myself and learned for days with astonishment, saying: How good and sweet is this learning. I became a son of this wisdom and her breasts fed me whenever I thirsted; and I shall never forget it. As I was learning, I set before me all the books of the divine Rashb”y and pondered upon them. My heart was as if in the mist of the sea, and I was confused by the depth of the many investigations. I said to myself: Let me take scribe’s inkwell and organize the investigations into categories in order to ease my mind. I saw from heaven that this counsel

was straight and right before the Almighty, and I started to inscribe a scroll as a reminder. I called it an orchard (*Pardes*) for various reasons. Firstly, the esoteric wisdom (*Kabbalah*) is called so. Secondly, since this scroll will restore my soul in this world and in the next, it is the orchard that I planted and where I shall delight. Its treatises are its shoots, its chapters its pomegranates. There, new interpretations are arranged orderly like the seeds of the pomegranate. So it is called the *Orchard of Pomegranates* (*Pardes Rimonim*).

We saw fit to divide this scroll into thirty-two treatises. These are the gates leading to the esoteric teachings of the *Torah* and its mysteries. Furthermore, we have divided the treatises into chapters – some lengthy and others short – all according to the size of the investigation. We beg the reader not to enter the treatises without the tables of contents and the order of the chapters, unless God forbid, harm should incur instead of profit. We assure that whoever follows this table of contents will gain more comprehension in this wisdom. However, nobody should think that only reading the explanations twice is enough, for the work is great. Likewise, nobody should leave a chapter until he knows it well, for even if we do not repeat ourselves, we rely on the previous chapter. Therefore, do not leave a treatise for the next one unless it is well understood. Then, you will walk securely and without fear. All this being said, we will not refrain from writing again what we already wrote somewhere else.