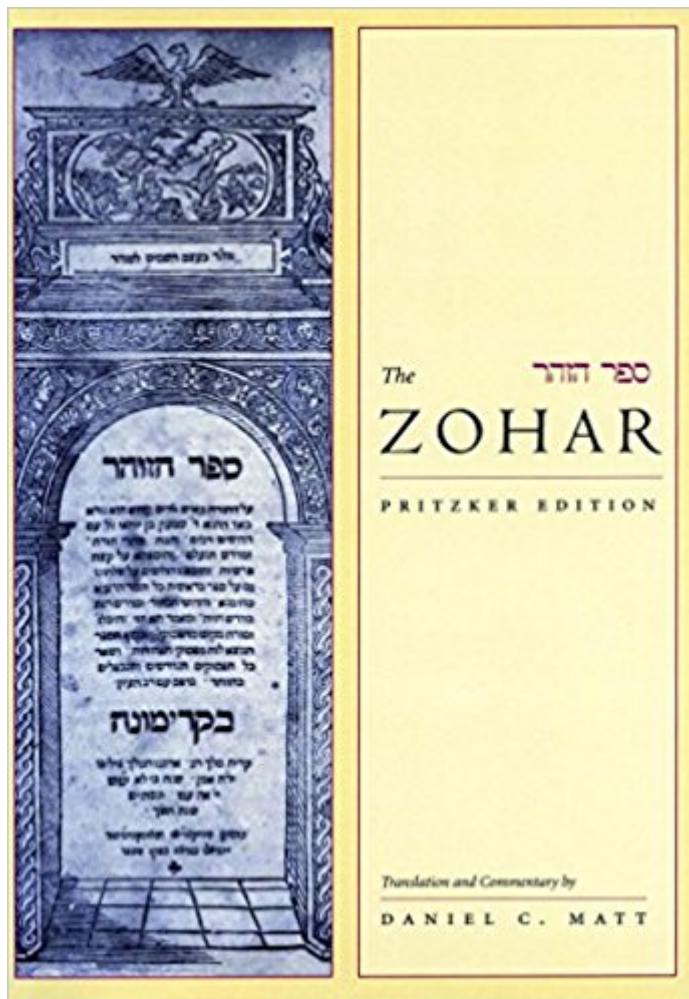


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# The Zohar: Pritzker Edition, Vol. 1



## Synopsis

The first two volumes of The Zohar: Pritzker Edition, translated with commentary by Daniel C. Matt, cover more than half of the Zohar's commentary on the Book of Genesis (through Genesis 32:3). This is the first translation ever made from a critical Aramaic text of the Zohar, which has been established by Professor Matt based on a wide range of original manuscripts. The extensive commentary, appearing at the bottom of each page, clarifies the kabbalistic symbolism and terminology, and cites sources and parallels from biblical, rabbinic, and kabbalistic texts. The translator's introduction is accompanied by a second introduction written by Arthur Green, discussing the origin and significance of the Zohar. Please see the Zohar Home Page for ancillary materials, including the publication schedule, press release, Aramaic text, questions, and answers. Further information on the Zohar: Sefer ha-Zohar, "The Book of Radiance," has amazed and overwhelmed readers ever since it emerged mysteriously in medieval Spain toward the end of the thirteenth century. Written in a unique Aramaic, this masterpiece of Kabbalah exceeds the dimensions of a normal book; it is virtually a body of literature, comprising over twenty discrete sections. The bulk of the Zohar consists of a running commentary on the Torah, from Genesis through Deuteronomy. This translation begins and focuses here in what are projected to be ten volumes. Two subsequent volumes will cover other, shorter sections. The Zohar's commentary is composed in the form of a mystical novel. The hero is Rabbi Shim'on son of Yohai, a saintly disciple of Rabbi Akiva who lived in the second century in the land of Israel. In the Zohar, Rabbi Shim'on and his companions wander through the hills of Galilee, discovering and sharing secrets of Torah. On one level, biblical figures such as Abraham and Sarah are the main characters, and the mystical companions interpret their words, actions, and personalities. On a deeper level, the text of the Bible is simply the starting point, a springboard for the imagination. For example, when God commands Abraham, Lekh lekha, Go forth... to the land that I will show you (Genesis 12:1), Rabbi El'azar ignores idiomatic usage and insists on reading the words more literally than they were intended, hyperliterally: Lekh lekha, Go to yourself! Search deep within to discover your true self. At times, the companions themselves become the main characters, and we read about their dramatic mystical sessions with Rabbi Shim'on or their adventures on the road, for example, an encounter with a cantankerous old donkey driver who turns out to be a master of wisdom in disguise. Ultimately, the plot of the Zohar focuses on the ten sefirot, the various stages of God's inner life, aspects of divine personality, both feminine and masculine. By penetrating the literal surface of the Torah, the mystical commentators transform the biblical narrative into a biography of God. The entire Torah is read as one continuous divine name, expressing divine being. Even a seemingly insignificant verse

can reveal the inner dynamics of the sefirotâ •how God feels, responds and acts, how She and He (the divine feminine and masculine) relate intimately with each other and with the world.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"At last, we have an authoritative version of one of the most significant, misunderstood, brilliant, difficult texts in the whole of the Jewish tradition, a translation that fulfills the wishes and scholars and seekers alike." (The Forward)"Daniel Matt's landmark translation of the Zohar from the original tongues into English is a tour de force of scholarship and linguistic imaginationâ •in the service of heaven." (Laurance Wieder University of Virginia in Charlottesville)"While translation may be an art, it can also be genuine scholarship of the highest order. . . . Restoring the Zohar to our comprehension, these volumes are a monumental contribution to the history of Jewish thought."

(Koret Jewish Book Award, Philosophy and Thought 2003-2004, The Zohar: Pritzker Edition, Volumes I and II)"Daniel Matt's translation of, and commentary to, the Zohar is a powerfully poetic rendition of this spiritual masterpiece. It is a book to be studied, not read. As one who has pondered and taught the Zohar for many years, I found Matt's interpretation learned, insightful, and very beautiful. Often, his translation and commentary changed my understanding of passages I thought I had already mastered." (David R. Blumenthal Journal of the American Academy of Religion)"[Matt's] text is the most authoritative English translation and the only English edition that goes directly to the source, unearthing many of the major surviving manuscripts of the original language." (Library

Journal)"Pinchas of Koretz once said that the Zohar saved his soul, and a great many other Jews down through the centuries would agree. The Zohar was considered by many pious Jews to be part of the holy triad by which they lived: the Bible, the Talmud, and the Zohar. And so it is good to have it accessible to a new generation of Jews, who will learn much from it, if they are willing to confront it, to wrestle with it, and to engage in the study of it with mind and soul." (Rabbi Jack Riemer)"Slow and meticulous study of the original text along with Matt's brilliant translation and extensive commentary will prove ultimately rewarding. The Pritzker Edition should find its place in any serious Judaica library together with all of the other major texts of Judaism." (Paul Howard Hamburg Association of Jewish Libraries)"...Thanks to Matt's achievement the English reader is able, for the first time, to appreciate the depth and complexity of this innovative and, at the same time, canonical mystical text." (Journal of Jewish Studies)"A powerfully poetic rendition of this spiritual masterpiece. . . . Matt's new Zohar is a classic already in its first two volumes. The edition alone, or the translation alone, or the commentary alone would be a major contribution. The whole is a work of art." (Journal of the American Academy of Religion)"More than a translation, this projected twelve-volume Pritzker edition amounts to an encyclopedia of the Zohar and is set to become one of the single most important contributions to the topic in the English-speaking world." (Times Literary Supplement)

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This is great, because the scholarship is impeccable, and the commentary is rich, understandable, and enlightening. The Zohar is so large, and this is the best guide that I have read. Note: I'm not a scholar or academic, but a long-time student of religion with a pain-staking read-with-a-dictionary reading knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, and a weak knowledge of classical Latin.

I enjoy reading this book. This translation is great and the commentary is wonderful. This is a special book to me, no doubt about that.

Vol 1 has an excellent scholarly introduction that gives us the history of the Zohar as well as explains how this edition was created - it is a construct of many written transcripts with the known printed edition. Its goal is to be as accurate as possible academically - and imo as well spiritually. A masterpiece of scholarly translation.

This book, is a marvellous book for whoever wants to deepen his/ her studies about the holy scriptures: the Bible. But again, this is not the Magical Zohar. The magical Zohar is a mystic book of magical knowledge. This one is more literal than magical.

Quite the academic representation! Tedious but highly informative reference book and exhaustive translation from Hebrew Zohar. My analysis brings the interpretation a little to the left, or right, whichever way you might define certain "political" aspects of religion, but the discerning reader will be able to easily analyze that level. I found the majority of the translations to be pretty fair representations of the basic Zohar ideology/theology, coinciding with most of my previous research, although there are several translations and descriptions with which I tend to disagree...in some instances, wholeheartedly! (I also disagree with a few of Gershom Scholem's interpretations in a few instances with his translations, to give you a reference point. Leave a comment if you wish to correspond.) This is an excellent reference book, as well as academic representation with an excellent overall historic background included in the 89 page Introduction written by Arthur Green; with pages that will even help to teach readers Roman Numerals! Students of Hebrew, the Zohar and Kabbalah will either love or hate the complexity of this book, depending on how deep one wishes to delve! The only downside I have found is in translations... I wish there were more references and extended examples of "possible translations" making this book THE most EXCLUSIVE translation of Zohar available!

This is not something for the average person to grab a hold of. I would recommend reading both Scholem's "Kabbalah" and Matt's "The Essential Kaballah." Followed by the Tanakh, and Tishby's works on the Zohar. Once those are out of the way, then you could begin taking up the daunting task of reading your way through the very books attributed to the movement known as 'Kabbalah.' I commend the author for taking on such a daunting task.

Thank You Daniel Matt and all involved in the creation of this publication. This series of books will take some time to peruse. The dividends are a wonderful delight to the mind. Thank You.

Great book for English speaking kabbalists. I use this often to better understand the Zohar, for serious students. Thanks Matt

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