

# Notes on the Zohar in English

Don Karr

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Email: [dko618@yahoo.com](mailto:dko618@yahoo.com)

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THE ZOHAR, or *Sefer ha-Zohar* (BOOK OF SPLENDOR), is without question *the* major text of classical Kabbalah. It is not a single book, but rather a collection of tracts of various sizes, there being about two dozen which form fairly coherent units. The bulk of the Zohar is a running commentary on the Torah, into which the numerous shorter tracts have been incorporated, added in the margins, or compiled as addenda to the various chapters. Some of the shorter tracts are in a separate section called the *Zohar Hadash* (the NEW ZOHAR), and there is yet a third section called the *Tikkunei Zohar* (the ARRANGEMENTS, or REPARATIONS OF THE ZOHAR).

Research concerning the authorship and chronology of the zoharic strata is on-going, though most scholars agree that the main body of the Zohar was written by Rabbi Moses de Leon (1250-1305) and perhaps some others in his circle toward the end of the thirteenth century into the beginning of the fourteenth. Later strata (*Raya Mehemna* and the *Tikkunei Zohar*), were written in the fourteenth century and added to de Leon's work.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the authorship of the Zohar, see Yehuda Liebes, "How the Zohar Was Written," in *Studies in the Zohar* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

Regarding the Zohar's internal chronology and its subsequent collection and publication, the most recent work has been published in Hebrew articles by Ronit Meroz and Boaz Huss; however, note the English articles by Meroz and Huss in the bibliography below.

On the evolution of the Zohar as a text, see Boaz Huss, *The Zohar: Reception and Impact* (Oxford – Portland: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2016), especially CHAPTER 2, "The Zohar as Imagined Book," and CHAPTER 3, "The Formation of the Zoharic Canon," pages 36-111. Also find Daniel Abrams, "From Manuscript to Print: The Production of a Standardized Text of *Sefer ha-Zohar* in Mantua (1558-1560)," in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, vol. 44, edited by Daniel Abrams (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2019), pp. 73-115.

Further, on whether the Zohar was originally a unified literary unit, i.e., a book, see Daniel Abrams, "Critical and Post-Critical Textual Scholarship of Jewish Mystical Literature: Notes on the History and Development of Modern Editing Techniques," in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, vol. 1, edited by D. Abrams and A. Elqayam (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 1996), and Abrams' "The Invention of the Zohar as a Book—On the

Two publications which can viably claim to be complete editions of the Zohar in English have been published (1 and 2), and another has been promised (3); see below regarding the following editions:

- (1) the Kabbalah Centre International
- (2) Stanford University, called the PRITZKER EDITION
- (3) Fiftieth Gate Publications

Before the Kabbalah Centre edition of the Zohar of 2001, somewhere between two-thirds and three-quarters of the Zohar had been put into English, and that spread over a handful of separate publications which varied greatly in method and quality.

This paper is divided into six sections:

1. [SOURCES OF THE ZOHAR IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION](#)
  - [TIKKUNEI ZOHAR](#)
  - [ZOHAR HADASH](#)
2. [DIVISIONS OF THE ZOHAR](#): a chart showing the different tracts and sections of the Zohar along with initial-coded entries to indicate books which contain translations of them
3. [PARASHOT/ZOHAR](#) §§ chart – Torah portions aligned with Zohar (PRITZKER EDITION) sections
4. [BIBLIOGRAPHY](#) with notes, listing books, sections of books, and articles which discuss the Zohar or some aspect of it. Many of these titles contain translated passages. Recommended items appear in boldface.
5. [RECOMMENDATIONS](#) for the pursuit of Zohar study in English
6. [“Zohar I 51b-52a...”](#) translated from the French of Jean de Pauly
7. [TRANSLATIONS COMPARED](#)

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Assumptions and Expectations of the Kabbalists and Modern Scholars,” in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, vol. 19, edited by Daniel Abrams (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2009), pages 7-142.

Many of Abrams’ articles have been collected and expanded upon in his 743-page *Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory: Methodologies of Textual Scholarship and Editorial Practice in the Study of Jewish Mysticism* (Los Angeles: Cherub Press – Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 2010; revised and expanded edition, 2014). Thus, regarding the theories of various leading scholars on the authorship and organization of the *Zohar*, see CHAPTER 4, “The Invention of the *Zohar* as a Book.”

An “Overview of Zohar Research” appears in Melila Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden: The Language of Mystical Experience in the Zohar* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009): pages 23-28.

On translations of the Zohar—not limited to English—see Boaz Huss, “Translations of the Zohar: Historical Contexts and Ideological Frameworks,” in *Correspondences: Online Journal for the Academic Study of Western Esotericism* 4 (2016), pages 81-128: <http://correspondencesjournal.com/15304-2/>.

## I. SOURCES OF THE ZOHAR IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The most comprehensive guide to the Zohar is *The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts*, by Isaiah Tishby and Fischel Lachower, the three-volume English version of which came out in 1989 (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The Littman Library).<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew original, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, has been a standard, lauded by scholars since its publication: volume 1 in 1949 and volume 2 in 1961.

In form, *Wisdom of the Zohar* is an anthology of Zohar readings arranged by subject. Each subject is thoroughly and clearly introduced; each translated passage is supported by ample explanatory footnotes. While most excerpts are a page or two in length, a few are quite extensive, such as the full translations of the section *Yanuka* (i on the divisions chart), major portions of *Sava* (h on the chart), and the first of the two *Hekhalot* sections (f on the chart). (*Wisdom of the Zohar* is keyed as IT on the chart.)

The principal virtue of Tishby-Lachower's rich study is the organization which it lends to the Zohar by bringing together passages on similar or related subjects—which, in the printed editions, are scattered all over the place—and by offering such complete and lucid introductions. In giving the reader so much help, Tishby makes the concepts of the Zohar, many of which are quite difficult and obscure, far more accessible than they would be from a translation standing alone.

The work which, from the 'thirties until rather recently, presented the largest amount of the Zohar in English (maybe two thirds) is the five-volume translation of Maurice Simon, Harry Sperling, and Paul P. Levertoff,<sup>3</sup> *The Zohar*, with an introduction by Dr. J. Abelson (Soncino Press, 1931-4, and a "student" edition by Rebecca Bennet Publications—frequently reprinted; keyed on the divisions chart as SSL). This set is often referred to as *The Soncino Zohar*.<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, SSL's idea was to present a coherent linear commentary to the Torah, but their omissions leave the reader frustrated. Missing are not only most of the inserted tracts but also many of the particularly difficult passages from the running commentary itself. Introductory material and notes are minimal.

Gershom Scholem (in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, p. 387, n. 34) says of SSL,

This translation is not always correct but it conveys a clear impression of what the Zohar is. It is to be regretted that too much has been omitted. The innumerable deliberate falsifications of the French translator, Jean de Pauly, are of course not to be found in this more solid and workmanlike translation.

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<sup>2</sup> Complete publication information on this and all other books which are discussed in this section is given below in § 3. [BIBLIOGRAPHY](#).

<sup>3</sup> See Elliot R. Wolfson's article, "Paul Philip Levertoff and the Popularization of Kabbalah as a Missionizing Tactic," in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, Volume Twenty-Seven, Special Issue: KABBALAH ON THE MARGINS – TRANSFORMATIONS OF KABBALAH IN ASHKENAZI SOCIETIES, edited by Daniel Abrams with guest editors Nathaniel Deutsch and Jean Baumgarten (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> *The Soncino Zohar* has been produced on CD-ROM for both Mac and Windows. This eZohar, which is the same as the printed books, can be gotten alone or on a CD-ROM, *Soncino Classics Collection*, which also includes an extensive selection of texts in both Hebrew/Aramaic and English: the Bible, the Talmud, and *Midrash Rabba*; the commentaries of Rashi on the Talmud and *Chumash*, and the *Tosafot* on the Talmud are in Hebrew only. *The Soncino Zohar* requires 128 MB RAM, CD-ROM drive, and 1.8 GB free hard drive space for installation. On the Internet, go to [www.soncino.com](http://www.soncino.com).

## Daniel Matt's comments on SSL:

The older English translation composed in the nineteen-thirties reads smoothly but often misunderstands the text. Its genteel prose is more paraphrase than accurate translation, avoiding unfamiliar terms, censoring erotic material, skipping difficult passages—even entire sections. The English flows *too* fluently compared to the original, subduing the unruly Aramaic, failing to render its untamed vibrancy. Moreover, since the translation is unaccompanied by a commentary, the symbolism remains impenetrable. Despite its shortcomings, I have learned much from consulting this translation....” (“The Zohar: Pritzker Edition,” lecture [SESSION 8:2b] delivered at the Association for Jewish Studies 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, Boston: AJS, December 21-23, 2003.)

After seventy years, SSL's Zohar was finally surpassed in scope by “The First Ever Unabridged English Translation with Commentary” offered by Kabbalah Centre International: *The Zohar* by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, with *The Sulam* commentary of Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (Yeshivat Kol Yehuda, 2001; VOLUME 23: *Index*: 2003—“Full Zohar” in English and Aramaic, online at [Zohar - Kabbalah Centre](#)). In twenty-two volumes, the Zohar is presented, paragraph by paragraph, in the original Aramaic and in English. The English is a translation of Rabbi Ashlag's *Ha Sulam* (THE LADDER), namely Ashlag's Hebrew translation of the Zohar containing his “embedded commentary,” which, in the Kabbalah Centre's edition, is shown in a different typeface from the Zohar text. (*Ha Sulam* was originally published in Jerusalem, 1945-55.) Most chapters are introduced by short summaries, which, starting at volume 3, are headlined “A Synopsis.” Some chapters are further set up by additional paragraphs headlined “The Relevance of the Passage.” Each volume contains a glossary of Hebrew words, including biblical names and kabbalistic terms.

Ashlag's commentary appositively identifies many of the Zohar's widely (wildly) ranging referents with *sefirot*, *parzufim*, and other features fundamental to Lurianic developments. Elsewhere the commentary fleshes out the Zohar's apparent shorthand, often by simply identifying the antecedents of potentially ambiguous pronouns. In some paragraphs, the commentary overwhelms the text; in others, no commentary at all appears.

Of the *Sulam* commentary, Isaiah Tishby (*Wisdom of the Zohar*, p. 105) says,

The explanations follow the Lurianic system and are of little help in clarifying the literal meaning of the text.<sup>5</sup>

Comparison with SSL shows that Kabbalah Centre's Zohar follows the same order but includes the material omitted from the former work. Thus, here one finds THE BOOK OF CONCEALMENT, the *Idrot*, both *Hekhalot* sections, etc.

While not unreasonably priced at just over \$20 per hefty hardbound volume,<sup>6</sup> the whole set represents something of a commitment, especially considering that, as editor Rabbi Michael Berg's introduction puts it, the Kabbalah Centre's Zohar is “*deliberately not* a scholarly edition” [Berg's italics]. What we do have is “a literal—not

<sup>5</sup> Tishby's “literal” should perhaps be “intended” or “original.”

<sup>6</sup> 2/8/2022: The Kabbalah Centre Zohar vols. 1-23 is on sale for \$250.00 at the Kabbalah Centre site: <https://store-us.kabbalah.com/collections/kabbalist-rav-berg/products/zohar-vol-1-23>.

a vernacular—translation” where “[m]aterial has not been condensed or moved to achieve clarity or a more logical presentation.”

A previous multi-volume work from Kabbalah Centre gives a translation of one particularly significant section of the later stratum<sup>7</sup> of the Zohar—and its longest tract—*The Zohar: Parashat Pinhas*, prepared by Rabbi Philip S. Berg (3 volumes, 1987-8, keyed as PSB on the chart). The set presents a major portion of *Raya Mehemna*, THE FAITHFUL SHEPHERD (*t* on the chart). This translation is nearly identical to the *Pinhas* portions of the newer Kabbalah Centre Zohar (volumes 20-21), indicating that this work was also based on Rabbi Ashlag’s *Ha Sulam*, though not all of the *Sulam* commentary is included. Here and there Rabbi Berg inserts commentary of his own in clearly marked paragraphs separate from the text. Further, Rabbi Berg uses the Standard English names of biblical books and other terms (e.g., NUMBERS instead of *Bemidbar*). Berg’s *Parashat Pinhas* includes an introduction and helpful indices to the three volumes.

For further translations from *Ha Sulam*, see Rav Michael Laitman, *The Zohar: Annotations to the Ashlag Commentary* (Toronto – Brooklyn: Laitman Kabbalah Publishers, 2009 & 2019), which gives—in English—the Zohar’s PROLOGUE (roughly the first half of VOLUME ONE of the Kabbalah Centre’s Zohar: §§ 1-260) with the *Sulam* commentary, additional commentary from the first part of Ashlag’s *Hakdamat Sefer ha-Zohar* (INTRODUCTION TO THE ZOHAR), plus Laitman’s “own explanations.”<sup>8</sup>

Another “complete” Zohar has been promised but has thus far seen only its first volume published: *Zohar: Selections Translated and Annotated by Moshe Miller* (Fiftieth Gate Publications, 2000). This inaugural volume provides introductory sections: “Historical Background,” “The Structure of the Zohar,” and “The Mystical Concepts of the Zohar.” Translated selections from the Zohar comment on the first four *parashot* of the Torah: *Bereishit*, *Noah*, *Lech Lecha*, and *Vayera*. However, Miller does not begin with Zohar 1:1 and progress in the order of one of the printed editions as SSL’s and Kabbalah Centre’s do; he presents the commentary following the order of the biblical verses, drawing on all parts of the Zohar, including *Zohar Hadash* and *Tikkunei Zohar*. Embedded in the Zohar text in smaller type are comments and explanations drawn from classic commentaries, such as *Or Yakar* [R. Moses Cordovero], *Or ha-Hamah* [R. Abraham Azulai], *Tanya* [R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi], *Ziv ha-Zohar* [R. Y. Y. Rozenberg], *Damesek Eliezer* [R. Eliezer Tzvi of Komarna], and the text for the Kabbalah Centre translation, *Ha Sulam* [R. Yehuda Ashlag].

<sup>7</sup> This “later stratum” includes *Raya Mehemna* and *Tikkunei Zohar*.

<sup>8</sup> Regarding Ashlag’s place in the scheme of Lurianic developments of *kabbalah*, see my paper, “Which Lurianic Kabbalah?” § 17, pages 63-64, at Academia.edu: [https://www.academia.edu/30928619/Which\\_Lurianic\\_Kabbalah](https://www.academia.edu/30928619/Which_Lurianic_Kabbalah).

For an extensive list of Ashlag’s writings in both their Bnei Baruch (Laitman) and Kabbalah Centre (Berg) manifestations, refer to “Notes on the Study of Later Kabbalah in English,” pages 55-57, at Hermetic Kabbalah and Academia.edu:

- <http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Biblios/lkie.pdf>
- [https://www.academia.edu/38974270/Notes\\_on\\_the\\_Study\\_of\\_Later\\_Kabbalah\\_in\\_English\\_The\\_Safed\\_Period\\_and\\_Lurianic\\_Kabbalah](https://www.academia.edu/38974270/Notes_on_the_Study_of_Later_Kabbalah_in_English_The_Safed_Period_and_Lurianic_Kabbalah).

The most important recent development in Zohar scholarship and publication is Stanford University's PRITZKER EDITION<sup>9</sup> of the Zohar, in both Aramaic and English, the great bulk of which, including the translation and annotation of the first nine of its twelve volumes, has been the work of Daniel Matt. The English translation is from a "critical text" which Matt compiled, using the Margaliot edition as a starting point, "based on a selection and evaluation of the manuscript readings" from around twenty "reliable manuscripts,"<sup>10</sup> some dating as far back as the fourteenth century, along with the Mantua and Cremona editions of the sixteenth century—all in Aramaic,<sup>11</sup> the original language of the Zohar (unlike the Kabbalah Centre's translation, which is based on a Hebrew translation *and* which includes Yehuda Ashlag's embedded Lurianic commentary).

Contents of the PRITZKER EDITION (PE on the chart below, § 2):

2004:	VOLUME I	Z1: 1a-76b, which includes the § <i>Haqdamat</i> (INTRODUCTION)
	VOLUME II	Z1: 76b-165b
2006:	VOLUME III	Z1: 166a-251a
2007:	VOLUME IV	Z2: 2a-94a
2009:	VOLUME V	Z2: 94b-179a, which includes §§ <i>Sava de-Mishpatim</i> and <i>Sifre di-Tsniuta</i>
2011:	VOLUME VI	Z2: 179b-244b
2012:	VOLUME VII	Z3: 3b-80a
2014:	VOLUME VIII	Z3: 80a-156b, which includes § <i>Idra Rabba</i>
2016:	VOLUME IX	Z3: 156b-299a, which includes §§ <i>Rav Methivtha</i> , <i>Yanuqa</i> , and <i>Idra Zuta</i>
	VOLUME X	Z1: 97a-140a; Z2: 4a-5b, 14a-22a, 35b-40b; ZH: 2b-26b, 27b-28d, 59a-c, i.e., § <i>Midrash ha-Ne'lam</i>
	VOLUME XI	§§ <i>Midrash ha-Ne'lam</i> on Song of Songs, <i>Midrash ha-Ne'lam</i> on Ruth, <i>Midrash ha-Ne'lam</i> on Lamentations, <i>Matnitin</i> , <i>Tosefta</i> , and <i>Sitrei Torah</i>
2017:	VOLUME XII	§§ <i>Heikhalot Be-Reshit</i> , <i>Heikhalot Pequdei</i> , <i>Piqqudin</i> , <i>Raza deRazin</i> , <i>Sithre Othioth</i> , <i>Qav ha-Middah</i> , the commentary on Ezekiel, <i>Zohar on the Torah Portions</i> , and <i>Tosefta</i> . <sup>12</sup>

VOLUMES I-IX comprise, for the most part, the Zohar's "running commentary"—and contain Daniel Matt's stunning work. Matt describes his translation as "literal yet poetic"<sup>13</sup> with the aim of preserving the character of the Zohar's rough prose. His numerous footnotes constitute a deep, complex, and most helpful commentary to the

<sup>9</sup> PRITZKER is the name of the sponsor of the Zohar translation/publication project, Margot Pritzker, *not* the name of a publisher or manuscript collection as many assume.

The Aramaic text which serves as the basis for Daniel Matt's translation can be viewed at Stanford's site, [www.sup.org/zohar](http://www.sup.org/zohar) > Aramaic Text Online.

<sup>10</sup> Matt, *The Zohar*, vol. I, p. xvii.

<sup>11</sup> Note the website, THE ARAMAIC LANGUAGE OF THE ZOHAR – RESOURCES FOR STUDYING KABBALAH IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE, at <http://aramaiczohar.wordpress.com/>:

"This site will provide resources for people interested in reading the Zohar, the text at the heart of the Jewish mystical tradition, in its original language, or who are interested in the Aramaic language more generally. It is part of a larger project by Judy Barrett and Justin Jaron Lewis, who are working on a beginner's textbook and a practical dictionary of the Aramaic of the Zohar."

<sup>12</sup> The *Tosefta* section in Volume XII is titled "Passages (Mis)Labeled as Tosefta"

<sup>13</sup> Matt, *The Zohar*, vol. I, p. xx.



text. Matt draws on a wide range of traditional Zohar commentaries, including those of Moses Cordovero, Hayyim Vital, and Yehuda Ashlag, as well as the work of modern scholars, such as Reuven Margaliot, Isaiah Tishby, Gershom Scholem, Yehuda Liebes, Charles Mopsik, Moshe Idel, and Elliot Wolfson.

VOLUME I includes an introduction by Arthur Green, which is reduced from his companion volume to the PRITZKER EDITION: *A Guide to the Zohar*, also published by Stanford. Green's *Guide* provides an exquisite overview, covering the history, structure, style, and concepts of the Zohar.<sup>14</sup>

Continuing in the manner and form of VOLUMES I-IX, *The Zohar*, VOLUME X commences the work of Matt's Australian colleague Nathan Wolski. This volume contains the main body of *Midrash ha-Ne'lam*, "the earliest layer of the Zoharic literary corpus" (PREFACE, page xi). Wolski's translation is supplemented by articles which appear in successive volumes of *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*: "Moses de León and *Midrash ha-Ne'elam*: On the Beginnings of the Zohar" (VOLUME 34) and "Radical Allegoresis and Neoplatonic Myth in *Midrash ha Ne'elam*" (VOLUME 35).<sup>15</sup>

VOLUME XI, prepared by Joel Hecker of Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, contains the translation of and commentary on *Midrash ha-Ne'lam al Shir ha-Shirim* (SECRET MIDRASH ON SONG OF SONGS), *Midrash ha-Ne'lam al Rut* (on RUTH), and *Midrash ha-Ne'lam al Eikhah* (on LAMENTATIONS). While possessing many of the characteristics of the *Midrash ha-Ne'lam* of VOLUME X, the *Midrash ha-Ne'lam* tracts on the *megillot* (SCROLLS) set themselves apart in several ways. For one thing, they lack the "bilingualism"<sup>16</sup> of the *Midrash ha-Ne'lam* on the *parashot* of the Torah; they are almost entirely in Aramaic. Further, as Hecker notes in his PREFACE, *Midrash ha-Ne'lam al Rut* was known under other titles, namely *Midrash Rut* and *Sefer Midrash Rut he-Ḥadash*. One senses that the title "*Midrash ha-Ne'lam*" was tacked onto these tracts after-the-fact, that is, by a later editor/compiler.

VOLUME XI also contains *Zohar al Shir ha-Shirim* (ZOHAR ON SONG OF SONGS), along with *Matnitin*, *Tosefta*, and *Sitrei Torah*, which appear here as "discrete textual units" for the first time; these are usually "dispersed within the Zohar." (PREFACE to vol. XI).

VOLUME XII, featuring the combined efforts of Wolski and Hecker, is everything else: the odds and ends not included in previous volumes, *i.e.*, the two sections on the *Hekhalot*, *Pikkudin*, *Raza de Razin*, *Sithre Othioth*, *Kav ha-Middah*, the commentary on Ezekiel's chariot vision, scattered pieces on the Torah portions from *Zohar Hadash*,

<sup>14</sup> Green composed one of the loveliest articles on the Zohar that I've ever read: "The Zohar: Jewish Mysticism in Medieval Spain," in *An Introduction to the Medieval Mystics of Europe*, edited by Paul Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), pp. 97-134; also in *Essential Papers on Kabbalah*, edited by Lawrence Fine (New York University Press, 1995), pp. 27-66.

<sup>15</sup> Also find Wolski's "Metatron and the Mysteries of the Night in *Midrash ha-Neelam*: Jacob ha-Kohen's *Sefer ha-Orah* and the Transformation of a Motif in the Early Writings of Moses de León (*Zohar Hadash, Lekh Lekha, MhN 25c-26a*)," in *Kabbalah*, VOLUME 23 (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2010), pp. 69-94.

Further, see Joseph Dov Rosen's dissertation, *THE TALMUDIC ZOHAR: RABBINIC INTERDISCIPLINARY IN THE MIDRASH HA-NE'LAM* (Berkeley: University of California, 2017).

<sup>16</sup> The term "bilingualism" is used by Wolski in his PREFACE to indicate that "[t]he language of the *Midrash ha-Ne'elam* is partly Hebrew and partly Aramaic, and sometimes the two languages are mixed together in the same sentence"—as Tishby puts it, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, vol. 1, p. 2.

and other passages. *Raya Mehemna* and *Tikkunei Zohar*, however, are not included due to their being deemed later imitative works.<sup>17</sup>

Matching the highest academic standards with genuine sympathy for the text, the PRITZKER EDITION will undoubtedly become the English Zohar of choice among scholars and informed lay readers.

*Sefer ha Zohar* (English) by Shimon Bar Yohai ([n.p.]: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015) offers an inexpensive 15-volume paperback edition of the “complete” Zohar in English. There is also a hardcover edition in eight volumes of the same translation from Lulu Publishing (also 2015).<sup>18</sup>

While contents are listed as “public domain” at Lulu’s *Sefer ha Zohar* page, the text is from the Kabbalah Centre Zohar (2001-2003—see above). Right off the bat (Volume 1, page 1), the CreateSpace/Lulu version mistakenly reproduces the Kabbalah Centre’s introductory paragraph instead of the first segment of the PROLOGUE with which the Zohar opens. Otherwise, paragraphs within each portion are numbered just as in the Kabbalah Centre Zohar; the *Sulam* and Kabbalah Centre commentaries are omitted, as is the original Aramaic text.

Coming out of the Western esoteric stream that produced the Theosophical Society and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Nurho de Manhar’s *Zohar: Bereshith-Genesis* offers the first three portions of the running commentary (i.e., Z1 1a-96b—“*Bereshith* to *Lekh Lekha*”), including sections omitted by SSL, such as the first scheme of the *hekhalot* and Zohar I: 51b-52a (see below, § 6). This version is a “non-literal” translation rendered in the light of Mme. H. P. Blavatsky’s teachings; throughout there are explanatory notes drawn from Blavatsky’s works.

Nurho de Manhar’s *Zohar* was originally published in serial form in 1900-14,<sup>19</sup> then reprinted in 1978 (and 1980) by Wizards Bookshelf of San Diego as part of THE SECRET DOCTRINE REFERENCE SERIES—“SECRET DOCTRINE” alluding to Mme. Blavatsky’s *magnum opus*.<sup>20</sup>

Nurho de Manhar is the pen-name of William Williams, an early member of the Golden Dawn.

<sup>17</sup> *Raya Mehemna* is included in the standard printed editions of the Zohar; thus, it appears in corresponding volumes of the Kabbalah Centre Zohar, namely volumes 9, 10, 16, 17, 20, 21, and 22. As mentioned, a large portion of *Raya Mehemna* (Z3 215a-258a) is the text of the three-volume translation prepared by Rabbi Philip S. Berg: *The Zohar: Parashat Pinhas*.

Four extended translations of the [Tikkunei Zohar](#) are described below, pages 15-17.

On *Raya Mehemna* and *Tikkunei Zohar*, see Pinchas Giller, *The Enlightened Will Shine: Symbolization and Theurgy in the Later Strata of the Zohar* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993). Giller points out that, “Although these texts have been viewed by scholars as secondary to the rest of the Zohar, they have been particularly beloved by kabbalists themselves.” (—p. xv.)

<sup>18</sup> Since September 2019, there has been a Kindle version of this edition of the Zohar complete—4755 pages—sold by Amazon Digital Services for \$9.00: *Sefer ha Zohar* (English edition).

<sup>19</sup> In *The Word* (monthly), edited by H. W. Percival (New York: Theosophical Publishing Company, 1900-1914).

<sup>20</sup> *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy*. 2 volumes—standard edition, or 5 volumes—“Adyar” edition (London: Theosophical Publication Society, 1888), reprinted often.

Nurho de Manhar’s *Zohar* was reprinted again by Bibliobazaar/Pinnacle Press, 2017.



There are a number of translations of one particularly important set of Zohar texts: *Sifre deTzeniuta*<sup>21</sup> and the *Idrot* (b, c, d, and e on the chart).<sup>22</sup> Four versions among these stand out as the most reliable—certainly the most faithful to the original:

- (1) Roy A. Rosenberg's *Anatomy of God* (Ktav, 1972), which contains all four texts.
- (2) Pinchas Giller's *Reading the Zohar* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 159-173, which offers *Sifre deTzeniuta*<sup>23</sup> and *Idra de bi Mashkana* (b and e).
- (3) Daniel Matt's translations in the Pritzker Zohar: *Sifre deTzeniuta*, VOLUME V (Matt gives two renditions of *Sifra de-Tzeniuta*: one plain, i.e., without any of the usual footnote commentary, and a second quite fully annotated), *Idra Rabba* in VOLUME VIII, and *Idra Zutta* in VOLUME IX.
- (4) within the Kabbalah Centre *Zohar: Sifre deTzeniuta* appears in VOLUME II, pages 590-632, *Idra Rabba* in VOLUME 17, pages 126-333, and *Idra Zutta* in VOLUME 22, pages 357-477.

One of the founders of the Hermetic Order of Golden Dawn (established 1887), Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers, produced the well-circulated *Kabbalah Unveiled* (London: George Redway, 1887), which contains *Sifre deTzeniuta*, *Idra Rabba*, and *Idra Zutta* (b, c, and d on the chart) in English. Mathers translated these texts from the Latin of Knorr von Rosenroth (*Kabbala denudata*, tom. II, Sulzbach: 1684). Notes and glosses included by Knorr are incorporated into Mathers' translation, along with Mathers' own additions and notes. With all of this extra material, much of which is quite off the mark, this is not a clear presentation of these subtle, important texts.

Alas, Mathers' is the *only* version of these texts which has been reprinted—numerous times at that. A recent example: *The Kabbalah: The Essential Texts from the Zohar*, with a foreword by Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi [SACRED TEXTS] (London: Watkins, 2005), which was released as an inexpensive hardcover in May of 2021.

Another translation of *Sifre deTzeniuta* and the *Idrot*—one with an original, albeit unusual, purpose—is George Sassoon and Rodney Dale's work, *The Kabbalah Decoded: Mysteries of the Zohar* (London: Duckworth, 1978). Sassoon and Dale see in these texts a technical manual for the construction of a “manna machine,” thus offering a “non-mystical” explanation of how the Jews were fed in the wilderness (EXODUS 16).

This theory is exhaustively developed in *The Manna Machine* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1978) by the same authors, in which they “lay bare the description [of the Ancient of Days of the Zohar] in all its anthropomorphic detail, matching it piece by piece to similar machines made today for oxygen regeneration and food production in closed environments.” They theorize that this manna machine was brought down to earth by a being from outer space who set it up to help the Jews survive their forty-year sojourn in the Sinai Desert. Sassoon, an electrical engineer by trade, actually

<sup>21</sup> See Ronit Meroz, “The Archaeology of the Zohar – *Sifre Ditseni'uta* as a Sample Text,” in *Daat: A Journal of Jewish Thought & Kabbalah*, Volume 82 (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2016), ENGLISH SECTION, pages IX-LXXXV.

<sup>22</sup> In her book-length study of *Idra Rabba* (*Seekers of the Face*), Melila Hellner-Eshed adds (p. 19) “Idra Raza de Razin” (Z 2:122b-123b) to the list of *Idrot*. Elsewhere this text is treated as the second half of *Idra de bi Mashkana*.

<sup>23</sup> See also Pinhas Giller, “A Working Translation of the *Sifra de-Tzeniuta*,” which is § III in *Journal of Textual Reasoning: The Journal of the Society for Textual Reasoning*, Old Series: Volume 6, Number 2 (May/June 1997), which can be viewed on-line at <http://jtr.shanti.virginia.edu/textual-reasoning-vol-6-2-may-june-1997/>.

assembled a “manna machine” according to the “instructions” provided by the Zoharic texts.

In spite of this far-flung interpretation, *The Kabbalah Decoded* offers a clear, “literal” translation of the texts from the original Aramaic, with many interesting notes on the peculiar language of the Zohar.

In Ariel Bension’s book, *The Zohar in Moslem and Christian Spain* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1932; rpt. New York: Sepher-Hermon, 1974), CHAPTERS VIII, IX, and X are titled THE REVELATIONS MADE TO THE GREAT HOLY ASSEMBLY (VIII and IX) and THE REVELATIONS MADE TO THE SMALL HOLY ASSEMBLY (X). The opening sections of chapters VIII and X mirror the beginning narratives of *Idra Rabba* and *Idra Zutta*; thereafter Bension’s compilation does not correlate with other versions.

For other translations of *Sifre deTzeniuta* and the *Idrot*, see the bibliography under RUNES and ZAHAVY (both of which reproduce text from Mathers), and WORK OF THE CHARIOT.

The Work of the Chariot translations can be found online:

- *Sifra DeTzniyutha* at [WoC :: Sifra Detzniyutha \(workofthechariot.com\)](http://WoC::SifraDetzniyutha(workofthechariot.com))
- *Idra Rabba Qadusha* at [WoC :: Idra Rabba Qadusha \(workofthechariot.com\)](http://WoC::IdraRabbaQadusha(workofthechariot.com))
- *Idra Zuta Qadusha* at [WoC :: Idra Zuta Qadusha \(workofthechariot.com\)](http://WoC::IdraZutaQadusha(workofthechariot.com)).

The first half (Z2: 94b-104a) of *Sava*, or *Sava d’Mishpatim* (Z2: 94b-114a, *h* on the chart), is given in Aramaic and English, with extensive commentary (including numerous translated passages from other kabbalistic works), tables, diagrams, and twenty-one appendices, in what is described in the foreword as “a work in progress”: *Zohar: Sabba d’Mishpatim – The Old Man in the Sea*, PART ONE: REINCARNATION-RESURRECTION-REDEMPTION, translation and commentary by Rabbi Shabtai Teicher (1946-2009) (Jerusalem: 2004). Unfortunately, this work is no longer for sale anywhere; the times I checked—as far back as January 2007 through June 2008—the book was listed as “SOLD OUT.” As of December 28, 2008, all notices of the book were gone.<sup>24</sup> However, the KABBALAH ONLINE site features passages of Rabbi Teicher’s work.<sup>25</sup>

Fortunately, *Sava* in its entirety is in the Pritzker *Zohar*, VOLUME V, pages 1-139; the Kabbalah Centre *Zohar*, VOLUME 10, pages 284-455; and the Soncino *Zohar*, VOLUME 3, pages 282-341. Z2 94b-99b, the first third of *Sava*, appears in Tishby, pages 177-97.

A translation of *Midrash ha-Neelam* to the BOOK OF RUTH (*s* on the chart) comprises the often-overlooked *Mystical Study of Ruth: Midrash ha-Neelam of the Zohar to the Book of Ruth*, translated and edited, with introduction and notes by Lawrence A. Englander

<sup>24</sup> Note from 12/04/2015: *The Old Man in the Sea* no longer appears on the list of “Recommended Resources > Kabbalah Works in English > Classic Kabbalah Works” at Kabbalah Online:

[http://www.kabbalaonline.org/kabbalah/article\\_cdo/aid/380316/jewish/Classic-Kabbalah-Works.htm](http://www.kabbalaonline.org/kabbalah/article_cdo/aid/380316/jewish/Classic-Kabbalah-Works.htm)

<sup>25</sup> E.g., an excerpt from Teicher’s *Old Man in the Sea* can be found at CHABAD.ORG, “Shabtai Teicher”:

[https://www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article\\_cdo/aid/380668/jewish/Resurrection-and-Reincarnation.htm](https://www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article_cdo/aid/380668/jewish/Resurrection-and-Reincarnation.htm)

Also go to <https://www.kabbalaonline.org/search/results.asp?searchWord=teicher>  
<https://thereturninglight.org/rabbi-shabtai-teicher/>  
<https://www.mpaths.com/2009/11/rabbi-shabtai-teicher-ah.html>

with Herbert W. Basser (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993; keyed EwB on the chart). This work offers a translation and extended study of this incomplete segment of the *Zohar Hadash* in which “two major themes, the soul and the *sefirot*, alternate continually...” (—page xxii).

“[A]pproximately one half of the text” of *Sithre Othioth*, THE SECRETS OF THE LETTERS (p on the chart), is translated, and the whole text analyzed, in Stephen G. Wald’s book, *The Doctrine of the Divine Name: An Introduction to Classical Kabbalistic Theology* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988; keyed SGW on the chart). This important work has not received the attention that it deserves.

Gershom Scholem published a reader of Zohar excerpts in English: *Zohar: The Book of Splendor, Basic Readings from the Kabbalah* (Schocken Books, 1949—reprinted frequently). Scholem’s translations are of passages which appear elsewhere (e.g., SSL, Kabbalah Centre, Pritzker); however, his renderings are, in places, quite different from other translations.

Another collection of excerpts, more extensive than Scholem’s, is Daniel C. Matt’s *Zohar – The Book of Enlightenment* (Paulist Press, 1983). A fine introduction and ample notes supplement the translations. (One wonders, though, about Matt’s setting these passages in a free-verse format.)

More recently, a distressing abridgement of this book appeared as *Zohar: Annotated & Explained* (Woodstock: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2002), which offers about half of the passages from the Paulist publication. Explanatory notes, massaged into conventional prose from the more academic notes of the original work, face the pages of text. The most unfortunate victim of the abridgement is the introduction: the commendable 36-page introduction of the original work was chopped to a most inadequate eight pages.

In his foreword to *Tales from the Zohar - PART I: GENESIS* (Jerusalem: Haktav Institute, 1992), Aaron Avraham Slatki writes, “Anyone who sought to benefit from the tales of the righteous found that they are scattered throughout the sea of the Zohar, and are engulfed in the sea of concealed secret teachings and the forest of esoteric interpretations of the holy Torah. Now ... anyone may derive benefit from this magnificent treasure of true practices, moral teaching, fear of G-d, and Torah teachings inherent in the wonderful tales of the Zohar.” *Tales from the Zohar*, the Zohar’s narrative segments selected and translated (into Hebrew) by David Shalom Basri, has been put into English by Edward Levin.

Eight narrative segments from the Zohar are translated, with notes and extensive commentary, in Aryeh Wineman’s *Mystic Tales from the Zohar*, with Papercut Art by Diane Palley (The Jewish Publication Society, 1997; rpt. Skokie: Varda Books, 2001). A paperback edition of this book has been published which, unfortunately, does not include the lovely paper-cuts (Princeton University Press, 1998—MYTHOS Series).

In *Dreams of Being Eaten Alive* (Harmony Books, 2000), David Rosenberg treats the Zohar as one of the great works of world literature, albeit one not recognized as such. Rosenberg devotes some sixty pages to “New translations of the Kabbalah,” primarily Zohar, along with passages from *Midrash Rabba*, *Sefer ha-Bahir*, and *Sefer Yetzirah*, arranged by subject.<sup>26</sup>

Seth Brody’s selection of translated texts, *Rabbi Ezra ben Solomon of Gerona: Commentary on the Song of Songs and Other Kabbalistic Commentaries* (Kalamazoo: Published for TEAMS [The Consortium for Teaching Medieval Studies] by Medieval Institute Publications / Western Michigan University, 1989) includes “Zohar Hadash: Commentary on Lamentations” which is “considered by scholars to belong to the *Midrash ha-Ne’elam* stratum of the Zohar” (—p. 152). Along with the Zohar passage and R. Ezra’s commentary, Brody includes R. Bahya ben Asher of Saragossa’s commentary on GENESIS 1:1-2.

Part III, JEWISH MYTH AND MYTHMAKING IN THE MIDDLE AGES, of Michael Fishbane’s *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford University Press, 2003) offers numerous passages from the Zohar in English:

- in CHAPTER 10, “Introduction”
- in CHAPTER 11, “The Primordial Serpent and the Secrets of Creation”
- in CHAPTER 12, “Divine Sorrow and the Rupture of Exile”
- in Appendix 1:
  - § B. SEA MONSTERS AND THE MYSTERY OF EVIL: ZOHAR II 34A-35B
  - § C. DIVINE SORROW AND CONSOLATION: ZOHAR HADASH, EICHA (LAMENTATIONS)

Scores of passages from the Zohar are translated and discussed in the numerous works of Elliot R. Wolfson; refer below to § 4: BIBLIOGRAPHY, where items by Wolfson far outnumber those of any other scholar catalogued. Note in particular *Luminal Darkness: Imaginal Gleanings from Zoharic Literature* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2007), which collects eight of Wolfson’s previously published articles; and the substantial *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005) in which the Zohar is central to Wolfson’s protracted and ranging discussions of gender, poetics, existence/non-existence, embodiment, and numerous other topics.

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<sup>26</sup> On the topic of dreams, in 1515 (Salonika) Rabbi Solomon Almoli published his book of dream interpretations, *Pitron Halomot*. Almoli’s sources include the Talmud, the Zohar, R. Saadia Gaon, R. Hai Gaon, Maimonides, R. Eleazer of Worms, even Averroes, Avicenna, and al-Ghazzali. Two somewhat shortened translations of *Pitron Halomot* are available in English:

- (1) CHAPTER TWO of *Visions of the Night: A Study in Jewish Dream Interpretation* (Shambhala, 1990) by Joel Covitz, who says (p. 9), “The first part of *Pitron Chalomot* ... is at times heavy, polemical, repetitive, and even boring... In the abridged text, I have sought to spare the modern reader (Almoli’s) obsessiveness....”
- (2) Yaakov Elman’s translation, *Dream Interpretation from Classical Sources* (Ktav, 1998), which is rather less abridged than Covitz’, includes two appendices: passages from R. Manasseh ben Israel’s *Nishmat Hayyim* and R. Judah Moses Ftayya’s *Minhat Yehuda Haruhot Mesapperot*.

Elman’s introduction is scant. To fill this void, find Monford Harris, “The Interpretation of Dreams by a Sixteenth-Century Rabbi,” in *Studies in Jewish Dream Interpretation* (Jason Aronson Inc., 1994), pp. 39-63. Also find Annelies Kuyt’s article, “With One Foot in the Renaissance: Shlomoh Almoli and his Dream Interpretation,” in *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, Volume 6, No. 3 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), pp. 205-217.

“A full translation and in depth commentary” by Perets Auerbach covering the first section of the “Zohar Volume I: Introduction” (*Haqdamat* or PROLOGUE: Z I:1a-14b) is available as an e-text: *Zohar: The Book of Splendor* (Jerusalem: Association of Authentic Kabala Educators [A.A.K.E.], 2009). A.A.K.E. is described on the title page as “[a] society of sincere, genuine, dedicated kabalists who work individually and collectively to bring the light of the ancient mystical texts to the contemporary modern mind.” Find at the KABBALA ONLINE SHOP [2/8/2022—DEFUNCT LINK]:

<http://www.kabbalaonline-shop.com/Zohar-the-Book-of-Splendor-p/perets-zohar.htm>

Newly translated narratives—all from portions within the Zohar’s commentary to LEVITICUS and NUMBERS (3:20a-23a, 3:39a-41a, 3:67b-68b, 3:149a-150b, 3:157a-b, 3:159a-b, 3:267a-b, 3:303a), and two selections from *Zohar Hadash* (15 b-d, 53 c-d)—open the chapters of Nathan Wolski’s book, *A Journey into the Zohar* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010). Each passage is followed by a “discursive commentary”; these commentaries cite further passages from the Zohar and other sources.

Wolski writes (pages 19-20),

*Zohar* scholarship, which has attracted some of the greatest minds in Jewish studies, has not concerned itself with making its insights and discoveries amenable to a general readership and has been concerned instead with the kinds of questions that are quite properly the focus of academic work. This book seeks to redress this void and aims to open the mysterious, wondrous, and at times bewildering universe of one of the masterpieces of the world of mystical literature. Given the great luminaries who have explicated the world of the *Zohar*, it is not the intention of this study to present any radically new thesis about the *Zohar*. My aim, rather, is to mediate the *Zohar* itself, as well as the body of fascinating scholarship surrounding it—a body of literature beginning with the pioneering works of Gershom Scholem and Isaiah Tishby and continuing in our days with the works of Moshe Idel, Yehuda Liebes, Elliot Wolfson, and my teacher Melila Hellner-Eshed. My focus on zoharic exegetical narrative with particular emphasis on the literary and performative elements of the composition does, however, offer a new mode of *Zohar* analysis and has the additional advantage of providing nonspecialists a much clearer view into the world of the *Zohar* than is currently available.

*From the Depth of the Well: An Anthology of Jewish Mysticism*, ably edited by Ariel Evan Mayse (New York – Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2014) contains Zohar passages drawn primarily from Daniel Matt’s *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, plus the *Zohar Hadash* extract from Seth Brody’s *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (both listed above).

Passages from throughout the Zohar are drawn upon to compose a commentary to *Tehillim* in *Zohar – Psalms: A Prayer Book and Teaching for World Unity and Peace*, by Rabbi David M. Wexelman ([n.p.]: CreateSpace, 2017).

Most of the selections of Zohar translated on *Tehillim* in this book come from a translation of Zohar called Zohar Hebrew translation on Psalms. Other translation[s] that I have used are Sulam of Ashlag, Mituch Devash, etc. (—page 7)

The Zohar calls for peace. The Zohar is a book preaching unity of God and man; unity of man and man. Everyone has to change to achieve the goal of World Unity and Peace. (—page 23)



Numerous Zohar passages—and other sources—newly translated by the author appear in Eitan Fishbane's literary analysis, *The Art of Mystical Narrative: A Poetics of the Zohar* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). Moshe Halbertal's comment on the back cover says it well:

From Fishbane's masterful presentation we learn that the poetic and dramatic dimensions of the *Zohar* do not serve merely as a narrative frame to its content, but rather they embody, enact, and perform the calling of the master of the mystical circle and his disciples.

Find David Roskies' "Remarks on Eitan Fishbane" (online at the website *Tikkun* - <https://www.tikkun.org/newsite/remarks-on-eitan-fishbane>), which begins,

Gershom Scholem once joked that the best novel ever written about Shabbetai Zvi the false messiah was Scholem's own two-volume historical biography. But it is no joke to say that *The Art of Mystical Narrative* is a novel about the making of the Zohar, the central repository of Jewish messianic dreams. ... the reader must follow not one, but multiple plots:

Plot # 1 is about Shimon bar Yohai, fondly known as RaShBY, a saintly, messianic, semi-divine preacher, wandering about the ancient Galilee with his band of disciples, and whose dramatic death is presented as the theatrical climax of a sacred narrative. If this sounds suspiciously like the Christian Gospels, then you are the Ideal Reader, already alive to the second plotline.

Plot # 2 is about the visionary landscape of the medieval Castilian kabbalists, how they commune with the spirits of the dead saints, their impulse to reveal kabbalistic secrets, their own desire to forge a *hevraya*, a mystical fraternity, and about their Christian surroundings, similarly populated by saints, sinners, pilgrims, hermits, mystics and holy men.





## *Tikkunei Zohar*

“Translations of parts of all seventy Tikkunim, translations of parts of all 148 sections including both *a* and *b* sides,” claims the ad copy for Mark Siet’s 643-page introduction-text-commentary, *Tikkunei Zohar Revealed: The First Ever English Commentary* (CreateSpace, 2015). Thus, the translated “parts” of *Tikkunei Zohar* (u on the chart) are dispersed through 550 pages of Siet’s commentary, which consists primarily of allegorical interpretations about aspects of consciousness. Here are some examples of the commentary:

Tikun 18 (—page 169):

What does it mean to elevate prayer? It means to have in mind the consciousness of unity, the construction of the connection between Shekinah and Ha Kodesh Barachu. It is feeling of knowing and letting go into the unity of being.

Thought seeks to impress itself throughout the image of its making or it seeks connection until that image is made. ...

In prayer the image is affirmed by Amen.

Tikun 57 (—p. 393):

Consciousness presents itself in order to make itself known. It is the self-aware moment. It is the relationship of all things to a central point of perception in this case the ‘forming’ is the forming of thoughts to bring about the visions that are presented from the ground to place them in aspect to each other.

Tikun 69 (—page 426):

Here is a deep mystery. The tree of life is contained within the garden in which the tree of knowledge of good and evil resides. It is one inside the other. The tree of life is the absolute. The tree of knowledge of good and evil represents the random occurrences or rather the chaotic occurrences that may happen.

The Tree of Life is inherent in the soul and yet the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil enwraps it. ...

The complete *Tikkunei Zohar*, i.e., all seventy commentaries on the word *bereshit*, was published in English as *Tikunei Zohar – Rectifications of Splendor*, by Shimon bar Yochai, translated by Avraham Broide, in five volumes, listed as “tomes,” that is, Tome 1 of 5, Tome 2 of 5, etc. ([n.p.]: David Smith LLC, 2016/“edited by Fabrizio Del Tin,” [n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018):

- Tome 1: Preface, Introduction, Rectifications 1-13
- Tome 2: Rectifications 14-21
- Tome 3: Rectifications 22-55
- Tome 4: Rectifications 56-69
- Tome 5: Rectification 70, plus Rectifications (“in other versions”) 22-31, numbered as [1] through 11.

The preface to Tome 1 (p. vii) states,

[The *Tikunei Zohar*] contains deep secret mystical teachings, such as the account of Creation through the Hebrew letters, permutations, stirring dialogues, fervent prayers, and the explanation of the Hawayah (Tetragrammaton).

The Tikunim, literally Rectifications, are meant to repair and support the Shekinah (Divine Presence), so that we can restore Man from the fallen to the perfect state again.

This edition concludes each tome with the Aramaic text.

Another multi-volume edition of the *tikkunim* was independently published as *Sefer Tiqqunei HaZohar* (*Book of the Restorations/Adornments of the Illumination*), 3 volumes, First Full English Translation by הרב מג בבל רז [HARAB MAG BABEL RAZ (The Chief Magician of Mystery Babylon)] ([n.p.]: independently published, [n.d. ≈ 2019]). This edition is described as “the first complete lucid English Translation of a very ancient esoteric Jewish Qabbalistic [*sic*] principal text. It is complete with light annotations and elucidations and the original images that appeared in the original book.”

- Volume I (TZ1a-42b): Introduction (in other versions called “Prologue”), Tiqqun #5-#7, Another Introduction, Patafj Eliyahu, Tiqqun #1-#19.
- Volume II (TZ 42b-98a): Tiqqun #20-#66.
- Volume III (TZ 98b-149a): Tiqqun #67-#70, Addendum to #69, and other versions of some previous Tiqqunim (## 1-11—alternatively numbered 22-31).

The Chief Magician makes some unfortunate choices in his translation of certain terms. For instance, in both the first and second introductions to the *Tikkunei Zohar*, the first biblical quote (from DANIEL 12:3) is usually translated something like “The enlightened will shine like the brightness of the firmament”<sup>27</sup>—which, for many of us, has acquired a familiar ring. The HaRab Mag has unduly charged and cluttered this clause by rendering it “The Illuminati shall illuminate like the illumination of the firmament, etc.” (—volume 1, pages 4 and 96) Indeed, the word “Illuminati” is used throughout where other translations have “the enlightened” or “the wise.”

The Chief Magician writes in his EXORDIUM (volume 1, p. 3—reproduced as written),

This book is the most esoteric and ancient of all Israeli esoteric tradition.<sup>28</sup> The proofs are beyond the scope of this book, of course. But the holy initiate already knows this. Notwithstanding, this book is very Hebrew centric. It really is intended solely for Israelites who are fluent in Hebrew.<sup>29</sup> This is as Mashiafj beyn Yosef, who lived about 2000 years ago, in accord with the ancient Qabbalists taught that the holy mysteries are exclusively intended for Beyth Yisrael. And that is what makes translating this holy Hebrew book into any other language than Hebrew extremely difficult! Nevertheless, I have done my best to do so. I spent one day translating each page as holy angels surrounded me guiding my holy translation. HaSHEM would guide me and show me if there were any errors in my translation, opening the entire text to me for understanding. Still, I am sure much will be lost in translation. Notwithstanding, the text should be enough for the serious diligent non-Hebrew scholar.

<sup>27</sup> Pinchas Giller, *The Enlightened Will Shine* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), page 1. The Kabbalah Centre *Tikkunei haZohar* (cited below) has “And the wise shall shine like the brightness (*zohar*) of the Firmament” (page 47).

<sup>28</sup> While academics have deemed *Tikkunei Zohar* a later imitative work, kabbalists stress its importance. See above, note 17, and consider the following statements:

- Pinchas Giller: “The *Tikkunim* are, by their own definition, secondary and accessory to the Zohar. Nonetheless, they are important as a bridge between the internal development of the Zohar and the interpretive systems of subsequent kabbalists.” (*The Enlightened Will Shine*, p. 6)
- Ariel Bar Tzadok’s commentary to the opening of *Tikkunei Zohar*: “With these words begins the deepest and most profound of all Zoharic literature. The secrets within the *Tikkunei Zohar* are the foundation of everything Kabbalistic that came after it.” (<http://www.koshertorah.com/PDF/Tikkunei%20Zohar.pdf>, p. 1, ¶ 7)
- The ad copy at AMAZON.COM for The Chief Magician’s *Sefer Tiqqunei HaZohar*: “The esteemed Baal Shem Tob and others have all stated and agree that this book is *HaZohar* to *Sefer HaZohar*. Much of the *Sefer HaZohar* is written in code, code that can only be decoded through this book! Ergo, the reason this book is called *Sefer Tiqqunei HaZohar*, being the *tiqqunim* or keys and adornments to *Sefer HaZohar*.”

<sup>29</sup> The *Tikkunei Zohar* is, for the most part, written in Aramaic.

Online, the Light of the Torah website (also [http://ha-zohar.com/ZOHAR-ENGLISH\\_1.htm](http://ha-zohar.com/ZOHAR-ENGLISH_1.htm)) offers a Google Drive file (PDF) of a partial translation of the *Tikkunei Zohar* covering “The First Tikun” through “The Seventeenth Tikun,” appending the two introductions, at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/oBwRFZRSYGyc-3Q2R6WDZZbEtRUEU/edit#.PDF>

The text is followed by 34 pages of notes, first to the introductions then to the seventeen *tikkunim*.

Also online, “The Tikkunei Zohar by Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai,” with English translation, at <https://tikkuneizohar.tumblr.com/archive>.

To “start at the beginning (‘The Opening’)” go to

<https://tikkuneizohar.tumblr.com/post/22720652076/1-the-opening-rabbi-shimon-selected-a-way-and>

The Kabbalah Centre has supplemented its 22-volume English *Zohar* with a translation of the *Tikkunei Zohar* with the *Ma’alot haSulam* Commentary by Rav Yehuda Tzvi Brandwein, edited and compiled by Rabbi Michael Berg.

Brandwein (1903-1969) was a major student—some say the “foremost disciple”<sup>30</sup>—of Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (1885-1954). Brandwein died before completing his commentary, having finished his work on *Tikkunim* 1 through 22, i.e., what is included in Volumes 1 & 2 of Kabbalah Centre’s *Tikkunei Zohar*.

Volume 1 (א) (New York – Los Angeles: Kabbalah Centre International, Inc., 2019) is introduced by Rav [Philip S.] Berg, then offers the lengthy Prologue, *Petichat* (sic) *Eliyahu*, and *Tikkunim* 1-17. The text of *Tikkunei Zohar* is given in bold type; the commentary, seamlessly embedded, is in regular type. As with the *Ha Sulam* commentary within the Kabbalah Centre *Zohar*, these additions reflect the “Lurianic system.”

Volume 2 (ב) (New York – Los Angeles: Kabbalah Centre International, Inc., 2020) includes an introduction by Rav Yehuda Tzvi Brandwein, then continues with *Tikkunim* 18-22 in the same format as volume 1.

Both volumes conclude with three appendices:

- APPENDIX A: Ten Sefirot—Tree of Life, outlining the *sefirot*, *parzufim*, the five levels of the soul, Names of God, and Holidays
- APPENDIX B: Glossary
- APPENDIX C: Hebrew Letters—and vowels

In his introduction to Volume 1, Rav Berg tells us that his son, Rav Michael “felt a desire to complete the commentary of my righteous teacher [i.e., Yehuda Brandwein]” (p. xiii). He also says that, given their ten-year study of Ashlag’s writings, either of his sons, Michael or Yehuda, “could write the commentary on the *Tikkunim*” (p. xiv). Perhaps this means that Kabbalah Centre will produce further volumes covering *Tikkunim* 23-70 with Michael Berg’s commentary.

<sup>30</sup> Nehora.com at <https://www.nehora.com/pages/18%2A%2A%2A%2ARabbi-Yehudah-Tzvi-Brandwein.html> and Daily Zohar at [Rabbi Yehuda Tzvi Brandwein | Daily Zohar](#).

## Zohar Hadash

The *Zohar Hadash*, the NEW ZOHAR (= ZH), i.e., Zohar, or Zohar-like, material not originally included in the early printed versions, is well represented in the PRITZKER EDITION, volumes X-XII. Refer to the chart below, DIVISIONS OF THE ZOHAR, where the PRITZKER EDITION appears as PE, specifically ranks g, m-s, v-w, and z.<sup>31</sup>

Other works listed above treat portions of ZH: Lawrence A. Englander with Herbert W. Basser, *Mystical Study of Ruth*; Stephen G. Wald, *The Doctrine of the Divine Name*; Seth Brody, *Rabbi Ezra ben Solomon of Gerona...*; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking*; Nathan Wolski, *A Journey into the Zohar*.

Mark Siet's *Zohar Chadash Revealed: Kabbalah of Consciousness*, Volumes One and Two (independently published, 2019 & 2020) are lengthy oversize volumes (519 pages & 766 pages) offering "select passages" from *Zohar Hadash*. Volume One covers *parashot Bereshit* through *Ki Tisa* (about ¾ through *Shemot/EXODUS*), skipping some *parashot* along the way while adding commentary on other sections (e.g., *Ezekiel's Chariot*), presumably following the order of an unidentified printed ZH.<sup>32</sup> Volume Two skips around from *parashot Tzav* (within *Vayikra/LEVITICUS*) through *Ki Teitzei* (within *Devarim/DEUTERONOMY*), plus *The Song of Songs*.

What you will find is side by side Hebrew and my English translation of a copy of Zohar Chadash from an ancient source. (—Siet's Facebook page)

Along with Siet's commentary, each sub-section concludes with a summary of the subject-at-hand.

Siet's PROLOGUE to Volume One sets the tone of his text/commentary.

After the Zohar was written by Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai new writings continued to be produced. In fact you could almost say they were a school of thought which lead us to a particular bent to their discussions. What I have come to discover is that thought, Consciousness is the mystery around which all these discussions truly revolve. (—page i)

Siet's Facebook page adds,

Now with *Zohar Chadash Revealed* what we have is a rehash of the Torah. Given that we have the concepts presented in *The Zohar* and *Tikkunei Zohar* this represents the latest in mystical thought. It is here that it all comes together.

A specialized type of listening is employed in order to grasp those higher concepts. That's where my commentary fills in the blanks and keeps you on track throughout.

What you learn here you will be able to apply to any section or passage of Torah. It is Consciousness that is on display here. The commentary is direct and meant to stir the higher awareness into the Holy Awareness.

<sup>31</sup> In Italian, Volume 7 of *Sefer Ha-Zohar: Il Libro dello Splendore* is *Sefer Zohar Chadash: Il Libro del Nuovo Splendore – Shir Ha-Shirim / Cantico dei Cantici*, by Shimon Bar Yohai, translated by Sebastiano Gulli ([n.p.]: David Smith, LLC, 2016 / [n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018). For ZH on SONG OF SONGS in English (n on the chart), see the PRITZKER EDITION, volume XI, pp. 345-534.

<sup>32</sup> ZH was printed in Salonica, 1597, Kraków, 1603, and Venice, 1658. ZH contains additions to the Zohar on the following *parashot*: from *chumash BERESHIT*: *Bereshit*, *Noah*, *Lekh Lekha*, *Vayera*, and *Vayeshev*; from *chumash SHEMOT*: *Beshalah*, *Yitro*, *Terumah*, and *Ki Tisa*; from *chumash VAYIKRA*: *Tzav*, *Aharei*, and *Bahar*; from *chumash BAMIDBAR*: *Hukat*, *Balak*, and *Matot*; from *chumash DEVARIM*: *Va'ethanan*, *Ki Tetze*, and *Ki Tavo*. Also added are supplements to *Sitrei Otiyot* and *Midrash ha-Ne'elam*, and ZH on the *megillot*: *Shir ha-Shirim*, *Ruth*, and *Eikhah*.

2. DIVISIONS OF THE ZOHAR

a. commentary on the Torah	Z1—Z2—Z3	SSL	IT <sup>1</sup>	PE 1-9 KC 1-22
b. <i>Sifre deTzeniuta</i>	Z2 176b-179a	RR	GR	PE 5 KC 11
c. <i>Idra Rabba</i>	Z3 127b-145a	RR		PE 8 KC 17
d. <i>Idra Zutta</i>	Z3 287b-296b	RR		PE 9 KC 22
e. <i>Idra de bi Mashkana</i> <sup>2</sup>	Z2 122a-123b	RR	GR	PE 5 KC 10
f. <i>Hekhalot</i>	Z1 38a-45b <sup>3</sup> Z2 244b-262b <sup>4</sup>		IT	PE 12 KC 2 PE 12 KC 13
g. <i>Raza de Razin</i>	Z2 70a-76b  Z2 76b-78a  ZH 35b-37c	SSL		KC 10 PE 12 PE 4 <sup>5</sup> KC 10 PE 12 PE 12
h. <i>Sava de-Mishpatim</i>	Z2 94b-114a	SSL	IT <sup>6</sup> ST	PE 5 KC 10
i. <i>Yenuka</i>	Z3 186a-192a	SSL	IT	PE 9 KC 19
k. <i>Rav Methivtha</i> <sup>7a</sup>	Z3 161b-163a  Z3 163a-174b <sup>7b</sup>	SSL		KC 18 PE 9 KC 18 PE 9
l. <i>Sithre Torah</i> —parallel columns  • All §§ of <i>Sithre Torah</i> listed here appear in PE 11	Z1 74b-101b 109b-111a 147a-149b 151b-152a 156a-157b 162a-b 165a 254a Z2 146a 253b			PE 11
<i>Sithre Torah</i> —other fragments and translations	Z1 78b-81b 88a-90a 97a-102a 107b-111a 146b-149b 154b-157b 161b-162b	PG <sup>8</sup> PG <sup>9</sup> Myer <sup>10</sup>  PG <sup>11</sup>		DM <sup>12</sup>
m. <i>Mathnithin</i>	Z1 64a, 74, 97, 100b, 107b, 121, 147, 151, 154, 161b, 165, 232, 233b, 251 Z2 4a, 12b, 68b, 74, 260b Z3 49, 73b			PE 11

Mathnithin cont.	ZH 1d, 3a, 122b, 195a			
n. Zohar to Song of Songs	ZH 61d-75b			PE 11
o. Kav ha-Middah	ZH 56d-58d			PE 12
p. Sithre Othioth	ZH 1b-7b	SGW		PE 12
q. commentary on Ezekiel	ZH 37c-41a		IT <sup>13</sup>	PE 12
r. Midrash ha-Neelam	Z1 97a-140a Z2 4a-5b 14a-22a 35b-40b ZH 2b-26b 27b-28d 59a-c	PGM <sup>14</sup> SSL SSL SSL	IT <sup>15</sup>  IT <sup>15</sup>  RD <sup>18</sup>  IT <sup>19</sup>	KC 3-4 KC 8 KC 8 KC 9 WJ <sup>16</sup> WM <sup>17</sup>
s. Midrash ha-Neelam on Song of Songs Midrash ha-Neelam on Ruth Midrash ha-Neelam on Lamentations	ZH 60a-61d ZH 75a-91b ZH 91a-93b	EwB		PE 11 PE 11 PE 11
t. Raya Mehemna	Z2 40b-43a 114a-121a Z3 97a-104a  108b-112a  121b-126a  215a-258a  270b-283a	SSL  SSL  SSL  PSB	IT <sup>20</sup>  IT <sup>21</sup>  IT <sup>23</sup>  IT <sup>24</sup> GE <sup>25</sup>	KC 9 KC 10 KC 16 PE 8 <sup>22</sup> KC 16 PE 8 <sup>22</sup> KC 17 PE 8 <sup>22</sup> KC 20-21 PE 9 <sup>22</sup> KC 22
u. Tikkunei Zohar (passages from Tikkun 70)	Z1 22a-29a (selections) (complete)	MST/SSL TZDS 1-5	GE/GF <sup>26</sup> TZCM 1-3	- KC 1 -
v. additions to comm. on Ezekiel	ZH 31a-35b 37c-41a 93c-122b	MSH		PE 12
w. Ta Hazei	Z1 256a-262a <sup>27</sup> ZH 7a			
x. Tosefta	Z1 37a, 54b, 60a, 98b. Z3 55b			PE 11 PE 12
y. Pikkudin <sup>28</sup>	scattered through Z2 and Z3			PE 12
z. Zohar al ha-Parashot	ZH 20c-42c, 46c, 48a-56d, 58d60b TZ 116a-119a, 213b214b	MSH		PE 12



## KEY TO INITIALS:

(Full descriptions of these books and articles are given above or in the bibliography.)

DM.....	Daniel Matt. <i>Zohar – Book of Enlightenment</i> .
EwB.....	Englander with Basser. <i>The Mystical Study of Ruth</i> .
GE.....	Pinchas Giller. <i>The Enlightened Will Shine</i> .
GF.....	Pinchas Giller. “The Fire Lights”
GR.....	Pinchas Giller. “Appendix” to <i>Reading the Zohar</i> .
IT.....	Isaiah Tishby. <i>The Wisdom of the Zohar</i> .
KC.....	Kabbalah Centre International. <i>Zohar</i> . (KC – followed by volume number)
MSH.....	Mark Siet. <i>Zohar Chadash Revealed</i> .
MST.....	Mark Siet. <i>Tikkunei Zohar Revealed</i> .
Myer.....	Isaac Myer. <i>Qabbalah</i> .
PE.....	<i>The Zohar</i> : PRITZKER EDITION. (PE – followed by volume number).
PG.....	Raphael Patai. <i>Gates to the Old City</i> .
PGM.....	Raphael Patai. <i>Gates to the Old City and The Messiah Texts</i> .
PSB.....	Phillip S. Berg. <i>The Zohar: Parashat Pinhas</i> .
RD.....	David Rosenberg. <i>Dreams of Being Eaten Alive</i> .
RR.....	Roy Rosenberg. <i>Anatomy of God</i> .
SB.....	Seth Brody. “Zohar Hadash: Commentary on Lamentations” (in <i>Commentary on the Song of Songs</i> )
SGW.....	S. G. Wald. <i>The Doctrine of the Divine Name</i> .
SSL.....	Simon, Sperling, and Levertoff. <i>The Zohar</i> .
ST.....	Shabtai Teicher. <i>Zohar: Sabba d’Mishpatim</i> .
TZCM.....	Chief Magician of Mystery Babylon. <i>Sefer Tiqqunei HaZohar</i> .
TZDS.....	David Smith/eUniversity.pub. <i>Tikkunei Zohar – Rectifications of Splendor</i> , in five volumes
WJ.....	Nathan Wolski. <i>A Journey into the Zohar</i> .
WM.....	Nathan Wolski. “Metatron and the Mysteries of the Night...” (in <i>Kabbalah</i> )

## Notes to “DIVISIONS OF THE ZOHAR”:

- IT (Tishby) contains numerous passages from the running commentary. KC 1-22 and PE I-IX (above, PE 1-9) follow the running commentary. PE omits some of the inserted texts (e.g., *Midrash ha-Neelam*, *Zohar on Song of Songs*, *Mathnithin*, *Tosefta*, *Sithre Torah*, *Hekhalot*, and a few others), most of which are published separately in VOLUMES X-XII.
- What constitutes the *Idra de bi Mashkana* is a matter of some confusion. Scholem (*Kabbalah*, page 215) identifies it as Z2 127a-146b, whereas Roy Rosenberg (RR = *Anatomy of God*), following standard editions of the *Zohar* (i.e., paged according to the Mantua *Zohar*), places it at Z2 122b-123b, in apparent agreement with everyone except Scholem.  
A translation of *Idra de bi Mashkana* = Z2 122b-123b appears in Rosenberg (pages 182-188), Tishby (IT VOLUME I, pages 337-341), and Giller (*Reading the Zohar*, pp. 169-173), as well as KC 10 (pages 547-559) and PE 5 (pages 150-158). Giller calls this section simply “The Shorter *Idra*” and suggests (*Reading the Zohar*, p. 90) that the actual *Idra de bi Mashkana* is lost or not identified as such because it lacks the characteristic framing narrative of the other *Idrot*, i.e., that of the forum of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai and his circle. Matt states (PE 5, page 150, note 33) that while this section is surely part of the *Idra* literature, its identification as *Idra de bi Mashkana* “is doubtful.”
- Hekhalot* Z1 38a–45b and Z2 244b-262b do not appear in PE 1 and 6; these are in PE 12.  
For Z1 41a-45b, see IT, vol. II, pages 597-614, and for both sections of the *Hekhalot*, see KC 2, pages 14-111 and KC 13, pages 260-494.  
In the abstract to “From *Hekhalot Rabbati* to the *Hekhalot* of the *Zohar*: The Depersonalization of the Mysticism of the Divine Chariot,” in *Jewish Studies* 52 (Jerusalem: Journal of the World Union of Jewish Studies, 2017), pages 118-119\*, Joseph Dan notes that the *hekhalot* descriptions of the *Zohar* differ from those in *Hekhalot Rabbati* in three main ways:
  - the personal aspect is completely absent
  - the divine palaces are depicted at a low stratum in the celestial realms instead of at their summit
  - a separate system of “palaces of evil,” parallel to the divine palaces, is added.

4. Nathan Wolski offers “An Unpublished Conclusion to the Zohar’s ‘Halls of Holiness’ in *Heikhalot Pequdei*,” in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, vol. 33, edited by Daniel Abrams (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2015), pages 45-56.
5. As a separate section, *Raza de Razin* is included at Z2 70a-75b in parallel columns; it is continued in ZH 35b-37c. At this juncture of the Zohar, Matt includes what is apparently part of the Zohar’s running commentary: a discussion of physiognomy, which is occasionally viewed as a separate tract.
6. Z2 94b-99b, 103a, 106a-b; see IT pages 177-197, 517, and 1511-1513.
7. a. For *Rav Methivtha* intact, see PE 9, pages 54-151, and KC 18. The section which matches the *Rabbinic Fantasies* segment appears in PE 9, pages 96-108, and in KC 18, pages 112-130.  
On *Rav Methivtha*, see Nathan Wolski and Merav Carmeli, “Those Who Know Have Wings: Celestial Journeys with the Masters of the Academy,” in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, vol. 16, edited by Daniel Abrams and Avraham Elqayam (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2007), pp. 83-114.
7. b. Mark J. Mirsky states that the Zohar passage translated by Yaakov Elman in *Rabbinic Fantasies* (eds. Stern and Mirsky, pages 239-252—refer to the bibliography: “Elman”) is based on Z3 332-5 of the Margolioth edition. This pagination does not, indeed cannot, agree with our DIVISIONS OF THE ZOHAR chart in that our [Mantua] Zohar stops at Z3 299b. Mirsky notes that the translation appears in *Zohar be-Midbar: Shelah Lecha*, which, by our pagination is Z3 156b-176a; *Rav Methivtha* covers Z3 162a-174a. SSL omits 163a-174a; the *Rabbinic Fantasies* passage falls inside this gap (at Z3 166b-168a). Other passages from this gap are given in Tishby: for Z3 168b-169a, Z3 168a, and Z3 170a, see IT pages 672-3, 784-5, and 794-5.
8. Z1 81b; see PG page 427.
9. Z1 89a-90a; see PG pages 484-5.
10. Z1 97a, 98b, 99a 100a; see Myer pages 427-8.
11. Z1 148a-b; see PG pages 461-2.
12. Z1 147a-148a: see DM pages 75-79.
13. ZH 38a, 38a-b, 38d, 39d-40a, 41a; see IT pages 619, 492-3, 619-20, 643-5, and 615.
14. Z1 98a-99a, PG 496-7; Z1 135b-136a, see PM pages 243-5.
15. numerous passages
16. ZH 53 c-d in WJ, at the opening of CHAPTER 4. See also “Metatron and the Mysteries of the Night in *Midrash he-Ne’elam*,” in *Kabbalah* 23 (2010).
17. Wolski’s “Metatron and the Mysteries of the Night...” treats ZH *Midrash ha-Neelam* 25c-26a.
18. ZH 26b and 18d-19a; see DR pages 90-1 and 95-7.
19. numerous passages
20. Z2 40b-41a, 42b-43a; see IT pages 1317 and 265-6.
21. numerous passages
22. Matt does not identify these passages as *Raya Mehemna*. Indeed, *Raya Mehemna* is not included in the PRITZKER EDITION as it and *Tikkunei Zohar* have been “identified as imitations written by a later kabbalist.” (PE 1, page xv, note 2)
23. Z3 124a-126a; IT pages 1147-54.
24. Z3 275b-285a; see IT pages 262-5.
25. numerous passages
26. numerous passages
27. Giller, *Reading the Zohar*, p. 176, n. 8. Giller notes that *Ta Hazei* “was not identified [as a separate division] by Scholem or Tishby in their original delineations,” but that later Scholem (*Kabbalah*, pp. 217-218) added it into the list, and places it in ZH 7a and in the Cremona edition, 55-75.  
PE Z1, which follows the Mantua folio numbers, stops at 251a.
28. *Piqqudin* = “Commandments,” i.e., commentary on the *mitzvot* sprinkled through the Zohar. My list is likely incomplete. The *Piqqudin* are not usually identified as an independent section of the Zohar.

### 3. THE RUNNING COMMENTARY: *Parashot/Zohar* §§

PRITZKER EDITION (PE) volume numbers are included. Inserted texts that appear within the “running commentary,” i.e., PRITZKER EDITION volumes I-IX, are shown in green (■). Inserted texts that are appended in PRITZKER EDITION volumes X-XII appear in blue (■). Texts which do not appear in the PRITZKER EDITION are shown in red (■). *Parashot* shown in grey (■) have no Zohar sections.

PARASHAH	ZOHAR
<b>BERESHIT</b>	<b>PE VOLUME 1</b>
<i>Hakdamat</i>	I: 1a—14b
<i>Bereshit</i>	I: 15a—22a/29a—38a/45b—59a
<i>Tikkunei Zohar</i>	I: 22a—29a
<i>Hekhalot I</i>	I: 38a—45b [PE VOL 12]
<i>Noah</i>	I: 59b—76b
	<b>PE VOLUME 2</b>
<i>Lech Lecha</i>	I: 76b—96b
<i>Vayeira</i>	I: 97a—120b
<i>Haye Sarah</i>	I: 121a—134a
<i>Toldot</i>	I: 134a—146b
<i>Vayetze</i>	I: 146b—165b
	<b>PE VOLUME 3</b>
<i>Vayishlah</i>	I: 166a—179a
<i>Vayeshev</i>	I: 179a—193a
<i>Miketz</i>	I: 193a—205a
<i>Vayigash</i>	I: 205a—211b
<i>Vayechi</i>	I: 216a—251a
<b>SHEMOT</b>	<b>PE VOLUME 4</b>
<i>Shemot</i>	II: 2a—22a
<i>Va'eira</i>	II: 22a—32a
<i>Bo</i>	II: 32b—40b
<i>Raya Mehemna/</i>	II: 40b—41b/43a—43b
<i>Piqqudin</i>	II: 41b—43a
<i>Beshalah</i>	II: 44a—67a
<i>Yitro</i>	II: 67a—70a/78a—94a
<i>Raza de Razin</i>	II: 70a—78a [PE VOL 12]

	<b>PE VOLUME 5</b>
Mishpatim	II: 94a—94b/121a—126a
<i>Sava de-Mishpatim</i>	II: 94b—114a
<i>Raya Mehemna</i>	II: 114a—121a
Terumah	II: 126a—176a
<i>Sifre deTzeniuta</i>	II: 176b-179a
	<b>PE VOLUME 6</b>
Tetzaveh	II: 179b—187b
Ki Tisa	II: 187b—193b
Vayakel	II: 194b—220a
Pekudei	II: 220a—244a/263a—269a
<i>Hekhalot II</i>	II: 244b-262b [PE VOL. 12]
<b>VAYIKRA</b>	<b>PE VOLUME 7</b>
Vayikra	III: 3b—26a
Tzav	III: 27a—35b
Shemini	III: 35a—42a
Tazria	III: 42a—52a
Metzora	III: 52b—56a
Aharei Mot	III: 56a—80a
	<b>PE VOLUME 8</b>
Kedoshim	III: 80a—88a
Emor	III: 88a—107b
Behar	III: 107b—111a
<i>Raya Mehemna</i>	III: 108b-112a
Behukotai	III: 112a—115b
<b>BAMIDBAR</b>	
Bamidbar	III: 117a—121a
Naso	III: 121a—127b//145a—148b
<i>Raya Mehemna</i>	III: 121b-126a
<i>Idra Rabba</i>	III: 127b—145a
Beha'aloteka	III: 148b—156b

	PE VOLUME 9
<i>Shelah Lecha</i>	III: 156b—161b/174b—176a
<i>Rav Methivtha</i>	III: 161b-174b
<i>Korah</i>	III: 176a—178b
<i>Hukat</i>	III: 179a—184b
<i>Balak</i>	III: 184b—186a/192a—212b
<i>Yanuka</i>	III: 186a—192a
<i>Pinhas</i>	III: 213a—241b
<i>Raya Mehemna</i>	III: 215a-258a
<i>Matot</i>	—
<i>Masei</i>	—
<b>DEVARIM</b>	
<i>Devarim</i>	—
<i>Va'ethanan</i>	III: 260a—270a
<i>Raya Mehemna</i>	III: 270b—283a
<i>Eikev</i>	—
<i>Re'eh</i>	—
<i>Shoftim</i>	—
<i>Ki Teitzei</i>	—
<i>Ki Tavo</i>	—
<i>Nitzavim</i>	—
<i>Vayelech</i>	III: 283a—286a
<i>Ha'azinu</i>	III: 286a—287b/296b—299b
<i>Idra Zutta</i>	III: 287b—296b
<i>V'Zot ha-Berahah</i>	—

For details regarding narrative content, see Judy Barrett, “Some Stories of the Zohar: parashah, précis, characters,” at

[https://www.academia.edu/44858443/Some\\_Stories\\_of\\_the\\_Zohar\\_parashah\\_pr%C3%A9cis\\_characters](https://www.academia.edu/44858443/Some_Stories_of_the_Zohar_parashah_pr%C3%A9cis_characters)

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“This book is a study guide to a key text in Kabbalah, *The Introduction to the Zohar* by Rabbi Yehudah Ashlag, as published in English in *In the Shadow of the Ladder*.” –PREFACE, page ix. (See the explanation for the next entry.)

<sup>33</sup> For an extensive bibliography of R. Yehuda Ashlag’s works in English translation, see “Notes on the Study of Later Kabbalah in English: The Safed Period & Lurianic Kabbalah” (2021R2), pages 54-56, at

- [Notes on the Study of Later Kabbalah in English \(digital-brilliance.com\)](https://www.academia.edu/3066032/Notes_on_the_Study_of_Later_Kabbalah_in_English_digital-brilliance.com)
- [https://www.academia.edu/38974270/Notes\\_on\\_the\\_Study\\_of\\_Later\\_Kabbalah\\_in\\_English\\_The\\_Safed\\_Period\\_and\\_Lurianic\\_Kabbalah](https://www.academia.edu/38974270/Notes_on_the_Study_of_Later_Kabbalah_in_English_The_Safed_Period_and_Lurianic_Kabbalah)

\_\_\_\_\_. *In the Shadow of the Ladder: Introductions to the Kabbalah*. Translated from the Hebrew with additional explanatory chapters by Mark Cohen and Yedidah Cohen (Safed: Nehora Press, 2002).

This collection's CHAPTER 3, "Introduction to the Zohar," is a new translation of the text which appears as PART ONE of *An Entrance to the Zohar*, "A Preface to the Zohar." CHAPTER 4 is another substantial piece by Ashlag, "Introduction to the Study of the Ten Sefirot." *The Ladder* of the title refers to Ashlag's Hebrew translation (with commentary) of the Zohar, *Ha Sulam*—the work translated into English now distributed by The Kabbalah Center. See below: Berg.

\_\_\_\_\_. (Laitman, Michael, comm.) *Introduction to the Book of Zohar: Original Texts of Rav Yehuda Ashlag in Hebrew & English* (Toronto: Laitman Kabbalah Publishers, 2005).

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—Vol. II, *Introduction to the Book Zohar* includes "Preface to the Book of Zohar," which is the same text as *An Entrance to the Zohar*, PART TWO; and "Introduction to the Book of Zohar" which is the same text as *An Entrance to the Zohar*, PART ONE, and *In the Shadow of the Ladder*, Chapter 3. Both are presented with extensive commentary.

Rav Michael Laitman, a student and personal assistant of R. Yehuda Ashlag's son, R. Baruch Ashlag, has also written a series of introductory books on Kabbalah which are available in print and on the Internet at [www.kabbalah.info](http://www.kabbalah.info) > Free Kabbalah Books. See below, under "Laitman."

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Ch. XXIII. THE ZOHAR: *The Fallen Angels . . . Naamah, Lilith, the Rulers of Arka . . . The Paternity of Cain . . . Samael-Satan . . . Mystical Dualism*.

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For a host of papers on the language of the Zohar (syntax, grammar, vocabulary) which analyze the Aramaic/Hebrew through the medium of English, go to Judy Barrett’s page at Academia.edu: <https://independent.academia.edu/judybarrett>

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- VII. LEGENDS CONCERNING SOME OF THE DISCIPLES OF THE MASTER, SIMEON BEN JOCHAI
- VIII. THE REVELATIONS MADE TO THE GREAT HOLY ASSEMBLY
- IX. THE REVELATIONS MADE TO THE GREAT HOLY ASSEMBLY (CONT.)
- X. THE REVELATIONS MADE TO THE SMALL HOLY ASSEMBLY
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Ch 10. The Harmony of the Sefirot: The Conjunctive Points



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Gersh's efficient study manual is divided into two sections, Part One: "Kabbalah: An Overview," and Part Two: "Selections from the Sources." Of the ten passages, all but two (Vital's *Etz Hayim* 1:2 and *Yosher Divrei Emet*) are from the Zohar (Z3: 152a, Z2:42b, TZ:12bff [*Petach Eliyahu*], Z1:83a, Z1:11b, Z1:55b, Z1:49b, and Z2:39b). All passages are accompanied by Gersh's explanations. Appended to each chapter are study questions.

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Chapter 13, "Mysticism: The Kabbalah and the Zohar," includes a passage from the Zohar (Z2:70a-76a) on physiognomy—an odd choice for a survey chapter.

Giller, Pinchas. "Love and Upheaval in the Zohar's *Saba de Mishpatim*," in *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, vol. 7. (Harwood Academic Publishers GmbH, 1997).

This article reappears as Chapter 2 of *Reading the Zohar*.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Nesirah: Myth and Androgyny in Late Kabbalistic Practice," in *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, VOLUME 12, NUMBER 3 (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2003)

\_\_\_\_\_. *Reading the Zohar: The Sacred Text of Kabbalah* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Giller discusses how the Zohar was interpreted by the Safed Kabbalists: Moses Cordovero and, particularly, Isaac Luria—with special attention to developments of the *Idrot*. English translations of *Sifra DeTzeniuta* and *Idra de bi Mashkana* are provided.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Enlightened Will Shine: Symbolism and Theurgy in the Later Strata of the Zohar* [SUNY SERIES IN JUDAICA, MYSTICISM, AND RELIGION] (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

Later strata of the Zohar = *Raya Mehemna* and *Tikkunei Zohar*. This work has been cited as *The Tiqqunim: Symbolization and Theurgy*.

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Ginsburg, Elliot K. *The Sabbath in the Classical Kabbalah*. [SUNY SERIES IN JUDAICA: HERMENEUTICS, MYSTICISM, AND RELIGION] (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

Ginzberg, Louis. *Legends of the Jews*. [7 VOLUMES] (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, (1909-38) [2<sup>nd</sup>] 1937-66; reprinted Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1998).

The Zohar is cited throughout Ginzberg's voluminous notes. See vol. 7, "Index of Passages," pp. 573-580. The 1956 abridged version, *Legends of the Bible* (Simon and Schuster) and the paperback reprint of it from 1961, *Legends of the Jews* (one volume), are not helpful, having neither notes nor an index.

\_\_\_\_\_. *On Jewish Law and Lore* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955; reprinted New York: Atheneum, 1981).

§ 4. Allegorical Interpretation of Scripture

§ 6. Cabala

Gondos, Andrea. "GO YOU FORTH!": THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING IN THE ZOHAR. M.A. thesis (Montreal: Concordia University, 2005).

"The thesis examines the hermeneutic structure of the *Parashat 'Lekh Lekhah'* of the *Zohar*, arguably the most influential work of Jewish mysticism. The thesis argues and demonstrates that the *Zohar* continues the modes of classical midrashic exegesis through the incorporation of common stylistic and formal hermeneutical elements. At the same time, the thesis will also claim that the skillful use of hermeneutical and rhetorical techniques allows for the unique concealment and disclosure of esoteric-kabbalistic meaning. In order to show the idiosyncratic relationship between mystical content and narrative elements, the thesis focuses on the detailed examination of four areas: (1) the use of frequently recurring rhetorical and linguistic formularies in the text; (2) narrative characters and personalities; (3) the significance and depiction of theurgical activities; (4) the presence of various intertexts incorporated into the substructures of the *Zoharic* narrative." (ABSTRACT, page iii)

\_\_\_\_\_. *Kabbalah in Print: The Study and Popularization of Jewish Mysticism in Early Modernity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2020); on the *Zohar*, see especially CHAPTERS 4 through 6.

Gottlieb, Isaac. "From Formula to Expression in Some Hebrew and Aramaic Texts," in *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*, vol. 31 (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 2009), pages 47-61.

Grätz, H. *History of the Jews*. [6 VOLUMES] English "...done by various hands' and ...afterwards ...revised by me," i.e., Bella Loewy (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1891-8).

See Volume IV, *From the Rise of the Kabbala (1270 C.E.) to the Permanent Settlement of the Marranos in Holland (1618 C.E.)*, Chapter I: "Cultivation of the Kabbala, and Proscription of Science." Grätz' attitude toward the *Zohar* and *kabbalah* is reflected in segment titles such as "The Impostor Moses de Leon" and "Forgeries of the Kabbalists."

Green, Arthur. "Hillel Zeitlin and Neo-Hasidic Readings of the *Zohar*," in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, VOLUME 22 [THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MONASH UNIVERSITY, AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR JEWISH CIVILIZATION, ZOHAR SYMPOSIUM, HELD IN PRATO ITALY, JULY 13-5], edited by Daniel Abrams, with guest editors Nathan Wolski and Merav Carmeli (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2010).

\_\_\_\_\_. “Intradivine Romance: The Song of Songs in the Zohar,” in *Scrolls of Love: Ruth and the Song of Songs*, edited by Peter S. Hawkins and Lesleigh Cushing Stahlberg (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), pp. 214-227.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Keter: The Crown of God in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

See pp. 157-165, where two Zohar texts (Z3 209a and Z3 98a-b) are discussed. Writes Green, “Crowns and accounts of coronation are used by the Zohar with astounding frequency and in a great variety of ways” (p. 157).

\_\_\_\_\_. *A Guide to the Zohar* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

This excellent introduction to the Zohar is the companion to the 12-VOLUME translation by Daniel C. Matt (vols. 1-9), Nathan Wolski (vols. 10 & 12), and Joel Hecker (vols. 11 & 12), *The Zohar* PRITZKER EDITION (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004—).

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\_\_\_\_\_. “The Zohar: Jewish Mysticism in Medieval Spain,” in *An Introduction to the Medieval Mystics of Europe*, edited by Paul Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984).

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Hallamish, Moshe. *An Introduction to the Kabbalah* [= *Mavo la-Kabbalah*] translated by Ruth Bar-Ilan & Ora Wiskind-Elper (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Mystical Bodies, Mystical Meals: Eating and Embodiment in Medieval Kabbalah* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005).

This book expands upon Hecker's Ph.D. dissertation, *EACH MAN ATE AN ANGEL'S MEAL: EATING AND EMBODIMENT IN THE 'ZOHAR'* (New York: New York University, 1996).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Mystical Eating and Food Practices in the *Zohar*," in *Judaism in Practice from the Middle Ages through the Early Modern Period* [PRINCETON READINGS IN RELIGIONS], edited by Lawrence Fine (Princeton – Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001).

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Blessing of the Belly: Mystical Satiation in Medieval Kabbalah," in *Food in Judaism: A Special Issue of STUDIES IN JEWISH CIVILIZATION*, Volume 15, edited by Leonard J. Greenspoon, Ronald A. Simkins, and Gerald Shapiro (Omaha: Creighton University Press, 2005), pages 257-279.

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“In literature and psychology as in religion, intricate constructs have been developed that speak to the human search for an inner unity that is predicated on the polar opposition of sexual and parental imagery. However it is in the *Zohar*, the mystical *Book of “Brightness,”* that sexual imagery and its concomitant qualities reach their zenith if not their extremity. It is here that the mystical speculation surrounding God and God’s attributes, derived from verses in *Genesis* (1:26-27), most explicitly affirms the androgynous nature of reality, a reality rooted in existence itself.” (INTRODUCTION, page 17)

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The paradoxes are those that “the *Zohar* maintains regarding the being of the world and the human self. ... [T]he *Zohar* presents a picture of reality in which the cosmos and the human self are both one with and other than God simultaneously.” (from the ABSTRACT, p. v) “Becoming one with God is a central aspect of the dialectical worldview of the *Zohar* in a way that does not resolve the tension of these paradoxes. Moreover, mystical annihilation itself is paradoxical, in that the unification of the self with God is also a unification of the cosmos and the divine self with transcendence in a way that is both annihilative, yet renewing and sustaining.” (p. 270)

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“This book offers a semantic translation of *The Zohar* itself, Rabbi Ashlag’s *The Sulam* commentary, and my own explanations. The book also contains the first part of *The Book of Zohar—Hakdamat Sefer Sefer HaZohar* (Introduction of *The Book of Zohar*).” —*The Zohar*, page 18.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Unlocking the Zohar* (Toronto – Brooklyn: Laitman Kabbalah Publishers, 2011).

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and finally, how we will unlock *The Zohar* together to hopefully decode its secret. ... As a special treat for the curious among the readers, Appendix 3 contains selected excerpts from *Zohar for All*. After reading this book, you will be able to feel the power of *The Zohar* and enjoy its benefits.” (p. 6)

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An English translation of *Sifre deTzeniuta*, *Idra Rabba*, and *Idra Zutta* rendered from the Latin of Knorr von Rosenroth’s *Kabbala denudata* (Sulzbach: 1677 & 1689).

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“An important feature of *The Book of Mirrors* is the large number of passages from the Zohar which Rabbi David translates into Hebrew from the original pseudo-Aramaic. His renderings represent the first lengthy translations of the Zohar. Through them we see how a contemporary Kabbalist read and understood (sometimes misunderstood) the seminal Work of Kabbalah” (HUCA 51, p. 129).

The Scholars Press edition of *Book of Mirrors* is a slightly revised version of Matt’s Ph.D dissertation, *SEFER MAR’OT HA-ZOVE’OT by Rabbi David ben Yehudah he-Hasid: Text and Study* (Waltham: Brandeis University, 1978), available from UMI at [www.il.proquest.com](http://www.il.proquest.com)—easier to obtain than the book. A revision of Matt’s English introduction appears as “David ben Yehuda Hehasid and His *Book of Mirrors*” in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, vol. 51 (Cincinnati: 1980).

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- VOLUME I: Diagram of the Ten Sefirot, *Foreword* by Margot Pritzker, *Translator’s Introduction* by Daniel C. Matt, *Acknowledgements*, *Introduction* by Arthur Green, *Haqdamat Sefer ha-Zohar*, *Parashat Be-Reshit*, *Parashat Noah*.
- VOLUME II: Diagram of the Ten Sefirot, *Parashat Lekh Lekha*, *Parashat Va-Yera*, *Parashat Hayyei Sarah*, *Parashat Toledot*, *Parashat Va-Yetse*.

—2006

- VOLUME III: Diagram of the Ten Sefirot, *Preface* by Daniel Matt, *Parashat va-Yishlah*, *Parashat Va-Yeshev*, *Parashat Mi-Qets*, *Parashat Va-Yiggash*, *Parashat Va-Yhi*.

—2007

- VOLUME IV: Diagram of the Ten Sefirot, *Preface* by Daniel Matt, *Parashat Shemot*, *Parashat Va-Era*, *Parashat Bo*, *Parashat Be-Shallah*, *Parashet Yitro*

—2009

- VOLUME V: Diagram of the Ten Sefirot, *Preface* by Daniel Matt, *Parashat Mishpatim* (*Sava de-Mishpatim*) plus commentary which includes the so-called *Idra de bi Mashkana*, *Parashat Terumah* plus commentary, *Sifre di-Tsniuta*.

—2011

- VOLUME VI: Diagram of the Ten Sefirot, *Preface* by Daniel Matt, *Parashat Tetsavveh*, *Parashat Ki Tissa*, *Parashat Va-Yaqhel*, *Parashat Pequdei*.

—2012

- VOLUME VII: Diagram of the Ten Sefirot, *Preface* by Daniel Matt, *Parashat Va-Yiqra*, *Parashat Tsav*, *Parashat Shemini*, *Parashat Tazri’a*, *Parashat Metsora*, *Parashat Aharei Mot*.

—2014

- VOLUME VIII: Diagram of the Ten Sefirot, *Preface* by Daniel Matt, *Parashat Qedoshim*, *Parashat Emor*, *Parashat Be-Har*, *Parashat Be-Huqqotai*, *Parashat Be-Midbar*, *Parashat Naso*, plus commentary which is interrupted by *Idra Rabba*, *Parashat Be-Ha'alotekha*.

—2016

- VOLUME IX: Diagram of the Ten Sefirot, *Preface* by Daniel Matt, *Parashat Shelah Lekha* which is interrupted by *Rav Metivta*, *Parashat Qorah*, *Parashat Huqqat*, *Parashat Balaq* which is interrupted by *Yanuqa*, *Parashat Pinehas*, *Parashat Va-Ethannan*, *Parashat Va-Yelkh*, *Parashat Ha'azinu* which is interrupted by *Idra Zuta*.

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McGinn, Bernard. "The Language of Love in Christian and Jewish Mysticism," in *Mysticism and Language*, edited by Steven T. Katz (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Meltzer, David (ed). *The Secret Garden: An Anthology in the Kabbalah* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1976): Part Six. Hechaloth, Petach Eliyahu.

Though the editor claims that neither of these selections from the Zohar had been previously translated, the so-called "Hechaloth" (*hekhalot*) section had already appeared in English several times:

- a. in SSL (1931-4) vol. 3, pages 130-7, in a section which, in SSL, is rightly referred to as *Raya Mehemna*
- b. in Scholem's *Zohar – The Book of Splendor* (1949), pages 77-81
- c. in R. Yehuda Ashlag's *Entrance to the Zohar* (1974), pages 143-52, though this rendering appears to be paraphrased.

Translations of "Petach Eliyahu," a hymn from *Tikkunei Zohar*, had also previously appeared in English:

- a. in Raphael Ben Zion's *Way of the Faithful* (1945), pages 5-7; this collection was reprinted in the early 'seventies by Yesod under the title *Anthology of Jewish Mysticism* (reprinted again in 1981 by Judaica Press, New York);
- b. in Louis Jacobs' *Jewish Ethics, Philosophy and Mysticism* (1959) CHAPTER 20.

In *The Secret Garden* (p. 149), the Zohar segment there called "Hechaloth" was mistakenly numbered Z<sub>1</sub> 42b-43a, which, if correct, would set this passage into the first of the *Hekhalot* sections. However, the correct number for the section given is Z<sub>2</sub> 42a-43b, which is, in fact, part of *Raya Mehemna*.

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<http://kabbalah.1.tripod.com/id2.html>

Moses de Leon. “Jacob’s Journey,” translated and annotated by Daniel Matt in *Fiction*, vol. 7, nos. 1–2: RABBINIC FANTASY (New York: The City College of New York, 1983).

The same translation as in Matt’s *Zohar* (1983), pp. 75–9.

Muller, Ernst. *History of Jewish Mysticism*, translated by Maurice Simon (Oxford: East and West Library, 1946; reprinted, New York: Yesod Publishers, n.d.).

The Zohar–study: pp. 84–119; translated excerpts: pp. 174–80.

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iii. Antiquity of Zoharic Writings... Some quotations from Zoharic Writings

iv. Further Excerpts from the Zohar...

xviii. Excerpts from the Zohar

xix. Excerpts from the Zohar Continued

xx. (excerpts continued)

Appendix A. An Ancient Lodge of Initiates (a portion of *Idra Rabba*)

Myer’s book discusses ibn Gebirol’s work in relation to the *Zohar* and analyzes his *Mekor Hayim*. The bulk of the book is a survey of *kabbalah*’s history and relationship to other religious systems. Myer’s last chapters are devoted to translated excerpts from the *Zohar* (Zohar excerpts appear in Chapters 3, 4, 18, 19, 20, and Appendix A). Myer confused, or reinterpreted, some doctrine, e.g., the roles and order of the second and third *sefirot*: *hokhmah* and *binah* (pp. 259–63).

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Ch. VII. The Letters Translated

Ch. VIII. Rittangel, the Mystic – the Zoharic Passage in the Letters

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 22. The Decree                   | (ZH 26b)              |
| 23. The Curtain of Fire          | (Z2 14a-15a)          |
| 24. A Saint from the Other World | (Z1 5a-7b)            |
| 25. The Golden Scepter           | (Z2 13a-b; Z1 1721-b) |
| 26. The Book of Adam             | (Z1 117b-118a)        |
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"Chapters on Kabbalah will [cover] some of the analogues for *tselem* that are used in Zoharic literature to extend the divine image to aspects of the created world. The midrashic notion that the human unites heaven and earth through being in the *tselem* of the 'upper ones' or heavens will be compared with the ideas that evolved in Kabbalah, especially in Yosef Ashkenazi and Isaiah Horowitz, in which the *tselem* within the human is comprised of the image of all beings and levels of creation." (from the ABSTRACT)

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NOTE: Items marked with an asterisk (\*) are reprinted in Elliot R. Wolfson's *Luminal Darkness: Imaginal Gleanings from Zoharic Literature* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2007).

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\_\_\_\_\_. "Anonymity and the Kabbalistic Ethos: A Fourteenth-Century Super-commentary on the Commentary on the Sefirot," in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, vol. 35, edited by Daniel Abrams (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2016), pages 55-112.

\* \_\_\_\_\_. "Beautiful Maiden without Eyes: Peshat and Sod in Zoharic Hermeneutics," in *The Midrashic Imagination: Jewish Exegesis, Thought and History*, edited by Michael Fishbane (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Bifurcating the Androgyne and Engendering Sin: A Zoharic Reading of Gen 1-3," in *Hidden Truths from Eden: Esoteric Readings of Genesis 1-3*, edited by Caroline



Vander Stichele and Susanne Scholtz [SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE SEMEIA STUDIES; number 76] (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), pages 87-120.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Circumcision, Vision of God, and Textual Interpretation," in *History of Religions*, 27 (University of Chicago, 1987), pp. 189-215; also in Wolfson's *Circle in the Square* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 29-48.

The Gaon of Vilna (1720-97) is "cited to illustrate the linguistic process of God's self-disclosure" through his comments on *Sefer Yezirah* and the *Zohar*.

\* \_\_\_\_\_. "Coronation of the Sabbath Bride: Kabbalistic Myth and the Ritual of Androgynation," in *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, vol. 6. (Harwood Academic Publishers GmbH, 1997).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Eunuchs Who Keep the Sabbath: Becoming Male and the Ascetic Ideal in Thirteenth-Century Mysticism," in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York - London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1997) pages 151-185.

\* \_\_\_\_\_. "Fore/giveness on the Way: Nesting in the Womb of Response," in *Graven Images: Studies in Culture, Law, and the Sacred* 4 (Madison: School of Law, University of Wisconsin, 1998).

\* \_\_\_\_\_. "Forms of Visionary Experience in the Zoharic Literature," in *Gershom Scholem's MAJOR TRENDS IN JEWISH MYSTICISM 50 Years After* [PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY OF JEWISH MYSTICISM], edited by Peter Schäfer & Joseph Dan (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1993).

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005).

\* \_\_\_\_\_. "Left Contained in Right: A Study in Zoharic Hermeneutics," in *AJS Review*, vol. XI, no. 1, edited by Robert Chazan (Cambridge: Association for Jewish Studies, 1986).

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\* \_\_\_\_\_. "Light through Darkness: The Ideal of Human Perfection in the Zohar," in *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 81, no. 1. (Cambridge: Harvard Divinity School, 1988.)

\_\_\_\_\_. "Murmuring Secrets: Eroticism and Esotericism in Medieval Kabbalah," in *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism* [ARIES BOOK SERIES, vol. 7], edited by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Jeffrey J. Kripal (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2008)

\* \_\_\_\_\_. "Occultation of the Feminine and the Body of Secrecy in Medieval Kabbalah," in *Rending the Veil: Concealment and Secrecy in the History of Religions* [NEW YORK UNIVERSITY ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS], edited by Elliot R. Wolfson (New York: Seven Bridges Press, LLC, 1999); also in *Elliot R. Wolfson: Poetic Thinking*, edited by Hava Tirosh-Samuelson and Aaron W. Hughes (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2015), pages 35-68.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Patriarchy and the Motherhood of God in Zoharic Kabbalah and Meister Eckhart," in *Envisioning Judaism: Studies in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, edited by Ra'anan S. Boustán, Klaus Herrmann, Reimund Leicht, Annette Y. Reed, and Giuseppe Veltri, with the collaboration of Alex Ramos, Volume 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), pages 1049-1088.

\* \_\_\_\_\_. "Re/membering the Covenant: Memory, Forgetfulness, and the Construction of History in the Zohar," in *Jewish History and Jewish Memory: Essays in Honor of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi* [TAUBER INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF EUROPEAN JEWRY SERIES, 29] (Hanover – London: Brandeis University Press/University Press of New England, 1998).

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HELD IN PRATO ITALY, JULY 13-5], edited by Daniel Abrams, with guest editors Nathan Wolski and Merav Carmeli (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2010).

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\_\_\_\_\_. ***The Zohar* – PRITZKER EDITION** (Stanford: Stanford University Press):

—2016

- VOLUME X: Diagram of the Ten Sefirot, *Preface* by Nathan Wolski; *Midrash ha-Ne’elam* Z1 97a-140a; Z2, 4a-5b, 14a-22a, 35b-40b; ZH 2b-26b, 27b-28d, 59a-c.

Wolski, Nathan; and Carmeli, Merav. “Those Who Know Have Wings: Celestial Journeys with the Masters of the Academy,” in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, vol. 16, edited by D. Abrams and A. Elqayam (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2007).

“In a particularly beautiful Zoharic composition known as *Rav Metivta*, the Master of the Academy, the Companions of the *Zohar* ascend to the celestial academies of the members of this generation where they not only learn of their blessed fate, but also merit to participate in a most dynamic and animated fashion in their celestial existence.” (pages 83-4)

Appendices offer two passages from *Rav Metivta*: “Appendix A: *The Companions in the Garden of Eden*” and “Appendix B: *Rabbi Shimon and the Spirit-Guides*.”

Wolski, Nathan; and Hecker, Joel. ***The Zohar* – PRITZKER EDITION** (Stanford: Stanford University Press):

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- VOLUME XII: *Hekhalot*, *Pikkudin*, *Raza de Razin*, *Sithre Othioth*, *Kav ha-Middah*, the commentary on Ezekiel, and *Tosefta*.

Work of the Chariot. [WC #0] *Introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Hollywood: Work of the Chariot, 1971).

Contains “Hechaloth” (incorrectly numbered Z1 42b-43a) and “Petach Eliyahu” from *Tikkunei Zohar* – the same pieces as in Meltzer’s *Secret Garden*.

\_\_\_\_\_. [WC #2]

1. 2 – B . *Sifra Detzniutha: Zohar – Torah* (Hollywood: Work of the Chariot, 1971).
2. 2 – C . [ii] *Idra Rabba* (Hollywood: Work of the Chariot, n.d.)
3. 2 – C . [iii] *Lesser Holy Assembly* (= *Idra Zutta*) (n.p., n.d.)

Work of the Chariot has a website ([www.workofthechariot.com](http://www.workofthechariot.com)) where one can find all of the translations listed along with articles on the “Mystical Qabalah” covering

“Background,” “Sources,” “Core Teachings,” “Practices,” and a glossary. The articles—not the translations—also appear in a book advertised at the site: *Qabalah: The Mystical Heritage of the Children of Abraham*, by Daniel Hale Feldman (Work of the Chariot, 2001).

Yisraeli, Oded. “Cain as the Scion of Satan: The Evolution of a Gnostic Myth in the Zohar,” in *Harvard Theological Review*, Volume 109, Issue 1 (Cambridge: Harvard Divinity School, 2016), pp. 56-74.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Honoring Father and Mother in Early Kabbalah: From Ethos to Mythos,” in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 99, No. 3 (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), pp. 396-415.

\_\_\_\_\_. “The Controversy on the Antiquity of the Zohar in Its Sabbatean Context: The Incident of Rabbi Yaacov Emden (“Echoes of Shabbatai Sevi in Jewish Literatures” Conference, Montenegro, August 2015).

[https://www.academia.edu/14658006/The\\_controversy\\_on\\_the\\_antiquity\\_of\\_the\\_Zohar\\_in\\_its\\_Sabbatean\\_context](https://www.academia.edu/14658006/The_controversy_on_the_antiquity_of_the_Zohar_in_its_Sabbatean_context)

\_\_\_\_\_. “The Mezuzah as an Amulet: Directions and Trends in the Zohar,” in *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, Volume 22, No. 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), pages 137-161.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Midrashic Disputations in the Zohar,” in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, vol. 84-85 (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 2013-2014) pages 127-146.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Temple Portals: Studies in Aggadah and Midrash in the Zohar*, translated by Liat Keren [STUDIA JUDAICA, Band 88] (Berlin – Boston/Jerusalem: Walter de Gruyter/Magnes, 2016).

Zahavy, Zev. *IDRA ZUTA KADISHA: The Lesser Holy Assembly. Aramaic Text and English Translation* (New York: Sage Books, Inc., 1977).

Mathers’ translation of *Idra Zutta* is introduced by Zahavy’s ten-page essay, “Some Basic Elements of Kabbalah Study.”

Ziegler, Jerry L. *Ancient Wisdom of the Zohar: Volume 1. PROLOGUE TO A BEGINNING* (1996); *Volume 2. IN A BEGINNING* (1998); *Volume 3. THE FLOOD* (1999) (Stamford: Next Millennium Publishers).

Ziegler describes the rites of Passover, Sabbatical and Jubilees “in terms of the electrical effects that caused a divine light to shine on the devotees.” Ziegler draws on the Zohar to “rediscover the ancient wisdom of the Bible.”

Zinberg, Israel. *A History of Jewish Literature, Volume III: THE STRUGGLE OF MYSTICISM AND TRADITION AGAINST PHILOSOPHICAL RATIONALISM*, translated from the Yiddish by Bernard Martin (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973).

BOOK ONE, *Chapter Three: “The Zohar.”*

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

If the reader wishes to get acquainted with the Zohar but is reluctant to spend several hundred dollars in doing so, there are some fine introductory sources in paperbound editions. (Refer to the bibliography for details on the following titles.)

• Green	<i>A Guide to the Zohar</i>
• Matt [DM]	<i>Zohar – The Book of Enlightenment</i>
• Scholem	<i>Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism</i>

For the committed reader, researcher, or librarian wishing to acquire a definitive selection (as far as that is possible in English), to the above list add

• Berman	<i>Divine and Demonic</i>
• Fishbane	<i>The Art of Mystical Narrative</i>
• Giller	<i>Reading the Zohar</i>
• Giller	<i>The Enlightened Will Shine</i>
• Haskell	<i>Mystical Resistance</i>
• Hecker	<i>Mystical Bodies, Mystical Meals</i>
• Hellner-Eshed	<i>A River Flows from Eden</i>
• Hellner-Eshed	<i>Seeker of the Face: Secrets of the Idra Rabba</i>
• Huss	<i>The Zohar: Reception and Impact</i>
• Kabbalah Centre [KC]	<i>The Zohar</i> [22 volumes] <sup>34</sup>
• Liebes	<i>Studies in the Zohar</i>
• Matt/Wolski/Hecker [PE]	<i>The Zohar – PRITZKER edition</i> [12 volumes]
• Rosenberg [RR]	<i>Anatomy of God</i>
• Tishby [IT]	<i>The Wisdom of the Zohar</i> [3 volumes]
• Wolfson	<i>Luminal Darkness</i>
• Wolski	<i>A Journey into the Zohar</i>
• Yisraeli	<i>Temple Portals</i>

This list is confined to works on the Zohar, so it must not be thought of as an adequate list of works on *kabbalah* or Jewish mysticism in general. Scholem's *Major Trends* would be an excellent place to start.

To obtain a solid impression of Jewish mysticism and *kabbalah*, my recommendation is to read

- Scholem's *Major Trends...*
- Idel's *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*
- Wolfson's *Through a Speculum that Shines*

—in that order. These could be supplemented by Moshe Hallamish, *An Introduction to the Kabbalah* [= *Mavo la-Kabbalah*], translated by Ruth Bar-Ilan & Ora Wiskind-Elper (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> This title might not bear the critical scrutiny which the other works on the list would. See my comments above, pages 4-5.

<sup>35</sup> There are some “popular” books on *kabbalah* that offer well-crafted introductions, e.g., J. H. Laenen, *Jewish Mysticism: An Introduction*, translated by David E. Orton (Louisville – London – Leiden: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001); Neil Asher Silberman, *Heavenly Powers: Unraveling the Secret History of the Kabbalah* (New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1998); Joseph Dan, *Kabbalah: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); and Pinchas Giller, *Kabbalah: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London – New York: Continuum, 2011).

## 6. Zohar I 51b-52a

“Zohar I 51b-52a: an omission from the Simon and Sperling translation of the Zohar, translated from the French of Jean de Pauly (*Sepher ha-Zohar* [*Le livre de la splendeur*] doctrine ésotérique des Israélites; traduit pour la première fois sur le texte chaldaïque et accompagné de notes par Jean de Pauly. Œuvre posthume entièrement revue, corrigée et complétée, publiée par les soins de Émile Lafuma-Giraud...Paris: 1906-1911—6 volumes), [translated] by Thomas F. Daubert, Jr. and [edited by] D. Karr,” originally published in *Collected Articles on Kabbalah*, vol. 1, edited by D. Karr (Ithaca: KoM [# 5], 1985), pp. 13-16.<sup>36</sup>

(51 b) Note: the beings on high are all of the same illumination, being of celestial essence, whereas the beings below are of a different essence. They (the lower) are to this illumination (the higher) as the candle is to the flame.

Note: all space is divided into 45 parts (of which) each shows a different color. These seven different colors are the ones which, upon the striking of their emanations against the gems from seven mines, draw forth water, for it is the air of the color white which changes itself in water.

The light and the shadows are the only elements which form air and water. The one constituent element with light forms air, the one with shadows forms water.

On leaving its source, the light divides into 75 channels directed toward the material world. Upon the light's entrance into each of these channels a voice thunders which causes the deep to tremble. The voice makes heard these words: DIVIDE YOURSELF, O MATTER, IN ORDER FOR THE LIGHT TO PENETRATE WITHIN YOU. Thus it is written: DEEP CALLS TO DEEP AT THE THUNDER OF THY CATARACTS (channels) [Ps. 42:7].

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<sup>36</sup> This rendition of Z1:51b-52a was completed in the winter (January-February) of 1978, being the first of a proposed series of translations from various sources selected to fill the numerous gaps in SSL. Subsequently, four English translations of this passage have appeared:

- Wizards Bookshelf's edition of *Zohar (Bereshith-Genesis): An Expository Translation from the Hebrew* by Nurho de Manhar (San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1978 and 1980), pp. 220-222.
- approximately the first half of the passage above appears in Lachower and Tishby's *Wisdom of the Zohar* (Oxford/New York: Littman Library/Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 658-9.
- *The Zohar by Shimon bar Yochai . . . etc.*, edited and compiled by Rabbi Michael Berg (Jerusalem – New York: Yeshivat Kol Yehudah/Kabbalah Centre, 2001), in Volume 2, *Beresheet B*, § 55: “By forty-five colors of light,” pp. 185-192.
- The PRITZKER EDITION, prepared by Daniel C. Matt: *The Zohar* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), in Volume I, pages 286-9.



Below these channels there are 375 trenches, of which one part is of the color white, another of the color black, and the third of the color red. These trenches are divided into 17 classes, of which each presents the shape of a chain-net. Two of these chain-nets have the quality of iron, and two others that of copper (or brass).

At the two extremities of space are situated two thrones which are in constant communications with the channels and the trenches which go from one to the other. Each of these thrones forms a sky, one of which is on the right side and the other on the left. The one on the right is of the color black and the one on the left is multicolored. (52 a)

As the light goes from one throne to the other, it follows, for each time that the light of a throne has reached the other, by means of the course of channels mentioned, it returns near to the first throne to draw for itself new strength.

Thus, the light travels, through specific channels, from the throne on the right to the throne on the left, and returns, through certain other channels, from the throne on the left to the throne on the right. So it is with the blood in the veins of the human body. The blood ascends to the heart through specific veins and returns through others.

Such is the vision of this area of space which forms seven different colors. These seven colors constitute the supreme mystery.

Seven other lights are divided into seven seas, which together amount to one giant sea. This last is the supreme sea where seven others are concentrated.

The seven lights previously discussed fall into this giant sea and then become separated into seven parts, to correspond to the number of seven seas which, in essence, form the branches of the greater one, and thus is it written: AND SMITE IT INTO SEVEN CHANNELS [Is. 11:15].

Each of the seven branches subdivides into seven pools, each pool into seven rivers, each river into seven streams. The result is that the one preceding the water of the giant sea, of its branches, of its seven pools, of the seven rivers, of the seven streams, is connected (all with all).

A large fish, emanating from the left side, runs over all these courses of water. Its scales are as solid as iron. A flame shoots from its mouth which consumes all that returns along its path. Its tongue is tapered like a sword. With all its might it strains to penetrate the sanctuary, which is the giant sea, to defile its holiness, to extinguish the lights, and escape from the waters of the giant sea, once frozen, never again to impose itself on its (the sea's) branches.

This mystery is conveyed in the words of the scriptures: NOW THE SERPENT WAS MORE SUBTLE THAN ANY OTHER WILD CREATURE THAT YHVH ELOHIM HAD MADE. The awful serpent wanted to realize his goal: to defile the upper holiness by beginning to contaminate man here in the lower world. Recognizing the manner of construction of all the courses of water, he understood that causing the water of a stream to be briny would, in effect, reach all the way to the great sea. That is why he came to seduce man down here (on earth): in order to intercept the inferior watercourses with the major ones. The serpent had thus brought on the death of the world. He emanated from the left side. He was able to furtively enter the interior of man. But there is another serpent which emanated from the right side. Both serpents accompany man throughout his life.

The scriptures said: ...MORE SUBTLE THAN ANY OTHER WILD CREATURE THAT YHVH ELOHIM HAD MADE. For not all the animals on earth had been endowed with so much skill at wronging man as has been the serpent—because he constituted the veinstone of gold.

Bad luck to him who permits himself to hurry away from the serpent, for the serpent will cause that person's demise, and that of his successors as soon as that have arrived.

Adam was unable to avoid the serpent because he wanted to taste all of the pleasures (secrets) of the world below. The serpent, in showing him all of the pleasures of the world, interested him, and caused death for him and for all the generations which succeeded him.

Until the day when Israel was placed at the foot of Mount Sinai, the contamination of the serpent did not vanish from the world. As the scriptures said, That was when Adam and Eve sinned by attaching themselves to the tree of death.

## 7. TRANSLATIONS COMPARED

### Tikkun 21 (TZ 44b-45a)

Isaiah Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, Volume III, page 1053:

Rabbi Simeon began and said: Happy is the man who knows how to raise his will to the realms above, for his mouth utters names and his fingers write mysteries. And when the names ascend from his mouth a number of birds open their wings to receive them and all the beasts of the Chariot are prepared nearby to transport them. This is even more the case if the *Shekhinah* is present in his prayer and is raised to the Holy One, blessed be He. The mystery of this matter is in the verse “If you lie among the sheepfolds” (Psalm 68: 14). Do not read *im* (if), but *em* (mother). Happy is he who raises her to her husband in the realms above through the prayer that he utters with his lips. In the Morning Prayer she ascends through the name *El*, “the great *El*.” In the Afternoon Prayer she ascends through the name *Elohim*. In the Evening Prayer she ascends through the name *YHVH*. And the mystery of the matter is in the verse “He pronounces *El*, *Elohim*, *YHVH*, and summons earth” (ibid., 50: 1).

HaRab Mag, *Tiqqunei HaZohar*, Volume II, pages 16-17:

Rab Shimon opened and said:

“Happy is the one who prays and knows how to raise his will above. Behold, his mouth brings out names. And his fingers inscribe secrets.

(45A) – And when he raises the names from his mouth, many birds open their wings from above to receive them and many Living Creatures from the Chariot. All of the happen upon them to receive them. All the more so if *SHEĤINAH* rests over his prayer and She rises to The Holy One Blessed Be He. And the secret of the matter:

‘אם (If) ye lie down among the allotments...’ (LXX Sefer Tehillim 68:13).

But Qabbalistically read as:

‘Ye lay the אם (The Mother) between the lips...’ (Ibid.).

Do not read אם (If) but אם (Mother). Happy is the one who raises Her through his prayer which he prays with his lips, above to Her husband.

The Morning Prayer raises the name that is called אל (EL with a Gematria of 31). The Great EL certainly. The Afternoon prayer raises the name that is called ALOHIM. The Evening Prayer raises the name that is called יהוה. And the secret of the matter:

‘EL ALOHIM יהוה has spoken and called The Earth...’ (Sefer Tehillim 50:1).

## Z II 48a

*The Zohar*, translated by Harry Sperling, Maurice Simon and Paul P. Levertoff  
Volume III, page 147:

BUT LIFT THOU UP THY ROD, AND STRETCH OUT THINE HAND OVER THE SEA, AND DIVIDE IT. This signifies: “Lift up thy rod, on which is engraved the Holy Name; stretch out thine hand with the side bearing this Holy Name, so that the waters, beholding it, may flee before the power that is in its letters. The other side of the rod will be used for other ends.” Said R. Eleazar: ‘How is it that the rod is termed sometimes “the rod of God” and sometimes “the rod of Moses”? R. Simeon replied: ‘In the book of R. Hamnuna the ancient it is rightly remarked that the two names are equivalent, the purpose of the rod in either case being to stir up the powers of *Geburah* (Might, or Judgement). “Thine hand” indicates the Left Hand, which is that connected with *Geburah*. Woe,’ R. Simeon continued, ‘unto those who are def to the lessons of the Torah, which it proclaims to them every day. Water originates from the side of *Geburah* and issues thence. Now, therefore, that God desired to *dry up* the water, why did He bid Moses use his left hand? The answer is that Moses was bidden to “lift up his staff” to dry the waters, and to “stretch forth his hand” to bring them back on the Egyptians, through the agency of *Geburah*—the two operations being distinct. What is called here “sea” is later called “deeps” (Ex. xv, 8). This shows that God performed one miracle within another: causing the deeps to congeal in the heart of the sea, so that “the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea” (xv 8, 19).’

Daniel Matt, *The Zohar* [PRITZKER EDITION], Volume IV, pages 231-232:

*As for you, raise your staff* [וַיִּשָּׂא (unteh), *and stretch out, your hand over the sea and split it*] ... (Exodus 14:16). *Raise your staff*, on who is engraved the Holy Name. Bend your hand to one side, and as soon as the waters see the Name, they shall flee from it. So, וַיִּשָּׂא (unteh), *and turn your hand*—to one side, because the other sides of that staff you will needs for other waters.

Rabbi El'azar said, “I see that sometimes this staff is called ‘the staff of Elohim’ and sometimes ‘the staff of Moses.’”

Rabbi Shim'on said, “There were two, as has been established. Yet in the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava he explained well that all is one, whether it is attributed to the bless Holy One or to Moses. This staff is intended to arouse the side of *Gevurah*. Therefore, *stretch out your hand*—the left one, on the side of *Gevurah*.

Rabbi Shim'on said, “Woe to those who do not see that Torah is proclaiming in front of them! They do not know and do not care. Come and see: On the side of *Gevurah* waters arouse in the world, waters issue. Now the blessed Holy One wanted to dry up the water. So why *stretch out your hand*—which is the left? Well, *raise your staff*, to dry up the waters; and *stretch out your hand*, to bring the waters back—arousing the side of *Gevurah* and bringing the waters back on the Egyptians. Therefore, two elements here, as is written: *Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea*.

“*And split it*. But they were abysses! Well the blessed Holy One performed a miracle within a miracle, as is said: *Abysses congealed in the heart of the sea* (Exodus 15:8), and they walked on dry land in the midst of the water, as is written: *The Children of Israel came into the midst of the sea on dry land* (ibid. 14:22).

Zohar Hadash: Merkevet Yehezqel (ZH 37c)

Joel Hecker, *The Zohar* [PRITZKER EDITION], Volume XII, pages 443-444:

*God spoke all these words, saying...* (Exodus 20:1).

Rabbi Shim'on, Rabbi El'azar, and Rabbi Abba were sitting in assembly. Rabbi El'azar asked, "If it pleases Father, could he speak a word regarding the Account of the Chariot?"

[Rabbi Shim'on] replied, "But we have learned in the Mishnah, "Nor [may one expound the Account of] the Chariot in the presence of one!"

He replied, "Would Father prefer that I relate what I learned from him?"

Rabbi Abba departed—[for] Rabbi Shim'on said to Rabbi Abba, "Prepare a table for yourself, while El'azar remains with me."

Rabbi El'azar opened, saying "*In the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, when I was in the midst of the exile, by the River Kevar, the heavens opened and I saw visions of God* (Ezekiel 1:1). This verse—its speaker is unnamed! If Ezekiel, behold it is written subsequently: *It happened that the word of YHVH came to Ezekiel the priest* (ibid., 3). But this verse should have preceded. Since it was uttered under authorization, followed by *In the thirtieth....* Well, in truth, he spoke it—with the authorization of the blessed Holy One he spoke all that he spoke, and revealed all that he revealed.

Mark Siet, *Zohar Chadash Revealed*, Volume 1, pages 408-409:

And God spoke all these things, . Rabbi Shimon, and Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Abba would sit.

Rabbi Eleazar said, If it is good before my father, he will say one thing in the act of the chariot. He said to him, and we are both, not in a single carriage. He told him, my father's opinion that I was saying something I had learned from him. R. Abba went out, Rabbi Shimon told him to say to Abba, the table will be corrected, and Eleazar will be with my people.

Rabbi Eleazar answered and said, (Ezekiel 1:1) "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day, of the month, as I was among the captives by the river Chebar that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." This legend, it is not said who said, if Ezekiel, it is written after him, was the word of God to Ezekiel son of Buzi, the priest. And this Scripture had to be written in the beginning, because with permission he says, and then there were thirty.

Sifre deTzeniuta (Z II 176b)

Roy A. Rosenberg, *The Anatomy of God*, page 15:

Chapter One

It is taught: The Book of Concealment is the book describing that which is weighed in the balance; for before there was a balance, face did not gaze upon face. The primeval kings died; their crowns were no longer found and the earth was undone, until from the head of the Supreme Rapture the precious garments came forth and were bequeathed. The balance hangs in the place where that which is no longer found was never weighed. The balance exists through itself; it cannot be grasped or confined. In it have been weighed, and in it are weighed, that which never was, and that which is, and that which will be. This most recondite Mystery is formed and prepared in a skull filled with crystalline dew. The membrane of the air is purified and concealed. Each hair of the beard is of pure wool, descending symmetrically. The Supreme Will comes to be revealed through the prayers of those below. There is an eternal providence that never slumbers, watching steadily; the providence that guards the world below is also the one that gives light above. The two nostrils blow the wind (the breath) over all.

S. L. MacGregor Mathers, *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, pages 43-45:

CHAPTER I.

1. *Tradition*.—"The Book of Concealed Mystery" is the book of the equilibrium of balance.

[The word "Dtzenioutha" is difficult to translate, but I think its meaning is best expressed by the words "Concealed Mystery." I have explained in the Introduction the qabalistical meaning of the words "equilibrium" and "balance," § 29.]

2. *Tradition*.—For before there was equilibrium, countenance beheld not countenance.

[By the two countenances are mean, Macroprosopus and Microprosopus. See Introduction, §§ 42, 47, 64, 65, 67, 73, and 77.]

3. And the kings of ancient time were dead, and their crowns were found no more; and the earth was desolate.

[The "kings of ancient time" mean the same thing as the "Edomite Kings;" that is, they symbolize worlds of "unbalanced force," which, according to the Zohar, preceded the formation of this universe. I have explained this also in the Introduction, §§ 41 and 56. This and the immediately following sections are supposed to trace the gradual development of the Deity from negative into positive existence; the text is here describing the time when the Deity was just commencing His manifestation from His primal negative form. Therefore, according to the qabalistical ideas, the universe is the garment as it were of the Deity; He not only contains all, but is Himself all, and exists in all.]

4. Until that head (which is incomprehensible) desired by all desires (proceeding from AIN SVP, *Ain Soph*, the infinite and limitless one), appeared and communicated the vestments of honour.

[This Head, which is here described as proceeding from the infinite and limitless One, the *Ain Soph*, is the first Sephira, the Crown *Kether*, otherwise called *Arikh Anpin*, or *Macroprosopus*, the Vast Countenance. From this first Sephira the other nine emanations are produced. I have explained all this in the Introduction, §§ 38-57, in treating of the Sephiroth.]

5. This equilibrium hangeth in that region which is negatively existent in the Ancient One.

[By the expression "This equilibrium hangeth in that region which is negatively existent in the Ancient One," is meant that the other nine Sephiroth (which are equilibrated by their formation in trinities) are as yet not developed in the first Sephira, but exist within it as the tree exists in the seed from which it springs. By "the Ancient One," is intended the first Sephira, the Crown *Kether*, one of whose appellations is *Autheqa*, the Ancient One. From this Sephira, as I have before remarked, the idea of negative existence depends back towards the AIN.]



6. Thus were those powers equiponderated which were not yet in perceptible existence.

[These powers are the other nine Sephiroth, which are, as it were powers of the first Sephira; as soon as they are equated they become positively existent through correlation of force. The next two sections explain the manner of their equilibration while yet negative entities, or rather ideas.]

7. In His form (in the form of the Ancient One) existeth the equilibrium: it is incomprehensible, it is unseen.

[But the first idea of equilibrium is the Ancient One (the first Sephira, or Crown Kether), because it is the first potential limitation of the boundless light which proceeds from the Limitless One. That is, the central point of Kether is the equilibrium, because the balance does not yet exist, the two opposite poles which form the balance not being yet developed. We must not confuse these two terms, equilibrium and balance. The balance consists of two scales (opposing forces), the equilibrium is the central point of the beam.]

8. Therein have they ascended, and therein do they ascend—they who are not, who are, and who shall be.

[Therein (in the equilibrium of Kether) have they ascended (developed when they became positively existent), and therein (in the equilibrium) do they ascend (have their first existence), they (the Sephiroth) who are not (exist negatively). who are (then become positive), and who shall be (exist permanently, because they are counter-balanced powers). This triple expression “are not, are, and shall be.” also refers to the triple trinity of the Sephiroth.] (See Introduction. §§ 52, 64, 65 and 66.)

9. The head which is incomprehensible is secret in secret.

[This head is Macroprosopus, the Vast Countenance, and is the same as the Ancient One, or Crown Kether. It is secret, for therein are hidden the other potentialities.]

10. But it hath been formed and prepared in the likeness of a cranium, and is filled with the crystalline dew.

[The crystalline dew is the creative lux or *Aur*, AVR, proceeding from the Limitless One. The Mantuan Codex calls the skull or cranium the first, and the crystalline dew the second conformation of Macroprosopus.]

11. His skin is of ether, clear and congealed.

12. (His hair is as) most fine wool, floating through the balanced equilibrium.

[The ether is the clear and insupportable brilliance of his glory. The hair is white—*i.e.*, spotless as wool—to denote the utter absence of matter and of shell. The Mantuan Codex calls the ether the third conformation, and the hair the fourth, which latter it refers to the Sephira Netzach, victory.]

13. (His forehead is) the benevolence of those benevolences which are manifested through the prayers of the inferior powers.

[The supernal benignity which transmits their qualities, powers and offices, to the lower Sephiroth (the inferior powers). It must be remembered that each Sephira *receives from* that which immediately precedes it, and *transmits to* that which next follows it. Thus, each Sephira is said to be feminine or passive as regards its predecessor, and masculine or active in respect to its successor. (See Introduction, §§ 43 and 51.) The Mantuan Codex calls this the fifth conformation, and refers it to the idea of the ninth Sephira, Yesod, foundation.]

14. His eye is ever open and sleepeth not, for it continually keepeth watch. And the appearance of the lower is according to the aspect of the higher light.

[Were the eye to close (the directing thought Divine to be abstracted from the Sephiroth), the whole universe would give way, for its mainspring would be withdrawn. Because the appearance (development) of the lower (nine Sephiroth) is according to (dependent on) the aspect (ruling thought) of the higher light (Kether, the first Sephira). The Mantuan Codex terms this the sixth conformation of Macroprosopus, and refers it, as in the case of the fourth conformation, to the primal idea of the Sephira Netzach, victory.]

15. Therein are His two nostrils like mighty galleries, whence His spirit rushes forth over all. (The Mantuan Codex adds that this is the seventh conformation, which refers to MLKVTH, *Malkuth*, or “the kingdom,” the tenth emanation or Sephira of the Deity.)

[The creative spirit, or the “breath of life.”]

George Sassoon and Rodney Dale, *The Kabbalah Decoded*, pages 191-193:

# CHAPTER 1

1:1 The *Book of the Mystery* is the book of weighing (ShQIL) in the balance (MThQLA).

1:2 Tradition: before there was [the] balance, they were not looking face to face (APIN BAPIN).

The weighing in the balance may refer to measuring out of manna rations; 'face to face' is the code-phrase referring to the plugging together of the two parts of the machine. One of the more delightful interpretations of 1:2 is due to Helena P. Blavatsky, of Theosophist fame; she considered that it meant: 'Before there was civilisation, people had intercourse like animals instead of face to face.' Her 'Stanzas of Dzyan' are a direct crib from the *Book of Mystery*; it is no coincidence that her book, *The Secret Doctrine*, was published shortly after Mathers' translation appeared. Compare the title 'Stanza of Dzyan'—material unknown before the advent of HPB—with the Aramaic 'SPRA DTzNIOVThA'.

1:3 And the first kings died, and their nourishment (ZIVN) was not found. And the Earth (AROA) was made to cease. (BTL).

1:4 Until the head of shame (KSVPA) of all shames, the clothes of dignity (LBVShI DIQR), were formed and were put on.

KSVPA is used elsewhere to mean shame, but it can mean silver or money. 'Dignity' is our standard translation for IQR, but the word also means 'expensive'. Anybody's guess is as good as ours as to what this verse means; perhaps " 'Until the most expensive thing of all, the valuable clothes, were made and put on'. KSPVA can also mean desire, so another possibility is: 'Until the most desired things were expensive clothes and possessions'; however, there is nothing very mystical about this except to those who would take vows of poverty.

1:5 This balance hangs in the place of not-is (AThR DLA HVH).

1:6 There are weighed in it those which are not found.

For this, Mathers has the gorgeous: 'This equilibrium hangeth in that region which is negatively existent in the Ancient One. Thus were those powers equiponderated which were not yet in perceptible existence.'

1:7 The balance is standing (QAIM) in its body. It is not united and it is not seen.

1:8 In it they go up. And in it go up those which are not, [which] are, and [which] will be.

'Are' can also mean 'were' here; past and present are nor normally distinguished, only future, in the verbs. The result is a Runyonesque use of the present tense even when the past is meant (I am going up toity-toit street and I am seeing dis doll...).

1:9 (1) The secret thing (SThRA) within the [other] secret thing is formed; and it is arranged in one skull.

1:10 (2) The dew of bdellium fills it.

1:11 (3) The ether-skin (QRVMA DAVIRA) is clear (AZDKK, from ZKK), and conceals [it].

1:12 (4) They are the clean wool (ONR NQI); they hang in the balance.

1:13 (5) The desire of desires is opened in [?by] the prayers of the lower ones [the Israelites].

1:14 (6) The watching [eye] is open, which does not slumber and does not sleep. The lower watching [eye] is in the watching of the upper shiner [NHIRV] [which is in it].

1:15 (7) [There are] two nostril tubes (NVQBIN DPRDShQA) and the breath (RVCh) is discharged to all.

These numbers are in the original; KvR [Knorr von Rosenroth] mentions them, Mathers omits them. Mathers adds the description 'like mighty galleries' to the nostrils of 1:15.

Rav Metivta (Z III 161b-162a)

Daniel Matt, *The Zohar* [PRITZKER EDITION], Volume IX, pages 54-55:

...with one another what they were unable to say previously.

They emerged from that opening and sat in a garden under some trees. They said to one another, "Since we are here and have seen all this, if we die here, we will certainly enter the world that is coming!"

They sat down, and slumber descended upon them and they fell asleep. After a while, the official came [162a] and woke them saying, "Rise, go out into the orchard outside."

They went out and saw the Masters of Scripture, who were discussing this verse: "*In this desert that shall come to an end* (Numbers 14:35—but not in another place. *And there they shall die* (ibid.)—but not in another place. This refers to the bodies, but as for the souls, no—like the denizens of the Garden."

He said to them, "Did you hear anything within that level?"

They replied, "We heard a voice saying: 'Whoever ceases shall cease; whoever shortens shall be shortened; whoever shortens shall be lengthened.'

He said to them, "Do you know what this means?"

They replied, "No."

He said to them, "Did you see that great eagle and the child gathering herbs? It was Rabbi Ilai of Nisibis, he and his son. He came here; and he and the child. His son, saw this cave. As soon as they entered into the darkness, they could not bear it—and died.

*The Zohar* (Yeshivat Kol Yehudah/Kabbalah Centre edition), Volume 18, pages 63-64:  
[with the *Sulam* commentary of R. Yehuda Ashlag in SMALL CAPS]

**93.** THE BEGINNING OF THIS ARTICLE IS MISSING. They spoke with each other what they could no speak before this. They emerged from that opening and sat in the garden underneath the trees. They said to each other, Since we were here and saw all this, if we die here, we will most certainly attain the World to Come. They sat down. A sleep fell upon them. In the meanwhile, the one appointed came and woke them. He told them to get up and go into the orchard outside, MEANING TO THE EXTERIOR LEVEL. They went out. They noticed the scholars of the scriptures, who talked of this verse: "In this wilderness shall they be consumed" (Bemidbar 14:35), but not in another place, THAT IS, THEY WILL MERIT THE WORLD TO COME. "And there they shall die" (Ibid.), but not in another place, MEANING THAT THEY WILL HAVE THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME. That concerns the bodies – THAT EVEN IN THIS WORLD, THEY WILL ONLY DIE FROM THE ASPECT OF THE BODY – but not the souls, WHICH WILL BE similar to the denizens of the Garden, MEANING THE SOULS WILL MERIT THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

**94.** The appointed one told them to leave. They left with him. He asked them, Did you hear something on that level? They said, We heard that a voice was saying that whoever stops shall be stopped, whoever curtails shall be curtailed and whoever curtails shall be prolonged. He said to them, Do you understand what this means? They said no. He said to them, Did you see that great eagle and that child that picks grasses? This was Rabbi Ilai from Netzivin, he and his son. They arrived here and they saw him and his boy and this cave. As soon as they entered into this darkness, they were not able to stand it and died.