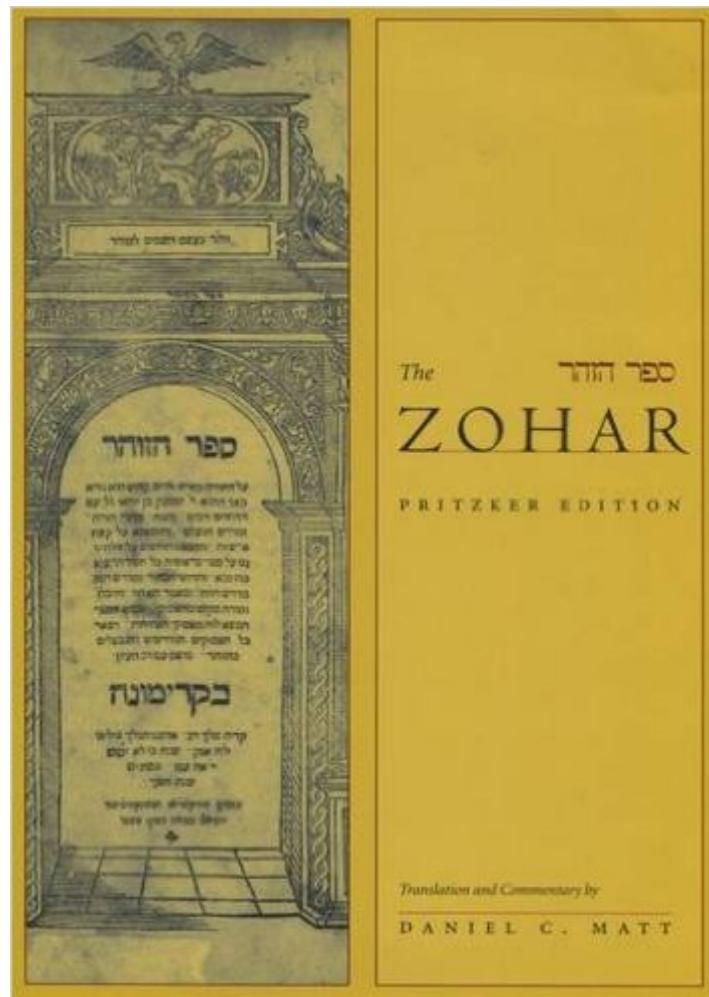


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The Zohar: Pritzker Edition, Vol. 3



Synopsis

This third volume of The Zohar: Pritzker Edition completes the Zohar's commentary on the book of Genesis. Here we find spiritual explorations of numerous biblical narratives, including Jacob's wrestling with the angel, Joseph's kidnapping by his brothers, his near seduction by Potiphar's wife, his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, and his reunion with his brothers and father. Throughout, the Zohar probes the biblical text and seeks deeper meaning; for example, the divine intention behind Joseph's disappearance, or the profound significance of human sexuality. Divine and human realities intertwine, affecting one another. Toward the end of Genesis, the Bible states: Jacob's days drew near to die; an idiomatic expression that the Zohar insists on reading hyperliterally. Each human being is challenged to live his days virtuously. If he does, those days themselves are woven into a garment of splendor; at death, they "draw near," enveloping him, escorting him to the beyond. Sefer ha-Zohar (The Book of Radiance) has amazed and overwhelmed readers ever since it emerged mysteriously in medieval Spain toward the end of the thirteenth century. Written in a unique Aramaic, this masterpiece of Kabbalah exceeds the dimensions of a normal book; it is virtually a body of literature, comprising over twenty discrete sections. The bulk of the Zohar consists of a running commentary on the Torah, from Genesis through Deuteronomy.

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Customer Reviews

Those who have purchased the previous two volumes may find this to be no less an endeavor of exegesis and scholarship. What this edition has done is quite simply (for all the effort) bring forth the

gem within the text that for many has been hidden for so long a time. With the addition of a .pdf file library, through the Stanford University Press website ([...] this edition for the first time puts in reach not only the Aramaic text but a VERY readable translation, with commentary and extensive notes. In particular the highlighting by example of words for explanation (in Hebrew font) is a most welcome addition. Incorporating an extensive bibliography and reference notation, the only possible lack would be the glossary: that could have been extended just a bit to include colloquialisms of the dialect (but then, that might take up a entire volume itself!... so...) The chance to peer into the culture of the Jews of the period through the reconstructed text, is another aspect of great value in these volumes. The terminologies the nuances of form, these subtleties are very valuable to any student wishing to get a better grip on the meaning of the intimations of the dialogue, and this opportunity is well afforded us in these volumes. In closing, if you want to study the Zohar and you are looking for a ready source of analytical work.., that provides text and translation, this is the series to get into your library.

I do not know Jewish mystical literature well. I am certainly not a student of 'Zohar' or 'Kabbalah'. I am a general reader who has looked at and read in this volume, and is giving a very general impression. The impression is also based on what I have heard major Jewish scholars and thinkers say in evaluating the volume. They say it is a true treasure of Jewish scholarship, an invaluable contribution to the world of Jewish learning. I reading the notes found them to truly add to my knowledge of the Parsha in question. Daniel Matt in an interview with 'Nextbook' gave two reasons for the current popularity of the 'Kabbalah' (Of which the most prominent text is the 'Zohar' He says. "Kabbalah is fairly unique: It's a spirituality that doesn't flee from the material world. It doesn't demand that you go off to a cave and meditate for 20 years. On the contrary, it demands that you engage the world, that you try to discover the divine spark in the material world, and thereby transform it. So it may appeal to people like Madonna, who have made it to the heights of materialism. She even defined herself in those terms. Somebody who does that will very naturally feel that there must be something else--and yet they're not willing to give up everything they've received. It's spirituality that doesn't demand you jettison all of the material, and yet it does demand that you look more deeply and search for some spiritual core. The other factor is that kabbalah is simultaneously strange and familiar. It's supernatural and exotic in some ways, but based on the most familiar text there is in the entire Western library: the Bible. The Zohar will say, well, Abraham stands for this quality of God, and Sarah stands for this.

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