

**Spelling.** Are you looking for [AZRIEL](#)?

# Pronunciation of Azrael

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## Pronunciation details of AZRAEL

How is Azrael pronounced?

International Phonetic Alphabet coded:

- Azrael = **'æzri:əl** ('/æ/zr/i:/ə/l)

## Hyphenation of AZRAEL

How is Azrael hyphenated?

- British and American usage: **Azrael** (no hyphenation)

## Example of pronunciation in real context

Click Play to listen a few seconds from the video:

[prewatch settings](#)

...- He was the voice actor for Gargamel. - Really? What about the cat? - **Azrael**. - **Azrael**, the one who gets kicked.

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Go to the [rhymes of Azrael](#) to find other words with regular correspondence of the sounds!

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# Sariel

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**Sariel** (Aramaic: ܣܪܝܐܠ, Greek: Ἀτρίηλ, 'Command of God') is one of the archangels mainly from Judaic tradition. Other possible versions of his name are Suriel, Suriyel (in some Dead Sea Scrolls translations), Esdreel, Sahariel, Juriel, Seriel, Sauriel, Surya, Saraqael, Sarakiel, Jariel, Suruel, Surufel and Sourial.

Suriel is sometimes identified with Ariel, Metatron, and Uriel. In 1 Enoch, he is one of the four holy archangels who is "of eternity and trembling". In Kabbalistic lore, he is one of seven angels of the earth. Origen identified Suriel as one of seven angels who are primordial powers. In Gnosticism, Suriel is invoked for his protective powers. He is commemorated in the calendar of the Coptic Orthodox Church on 27 Tubah. Wikipedia:Citation needed

Like Metatron, Suriel is a prince of presence and like Raphael, an angel of healing. He is also a benevolent angel of death (one of a few). Suriel was sent to retrieve the soul of Moses. It is said that Moses received all his knowledge from Suriel, (although Zazagel is credited also with giving Moses his knowledge). Wikipedia:Citation needed

## In traditional texts

### History

According to the Book of Enoch, Sariel, also called Saraqael (communicants of God) and Azrael (whom God helps), was one of the leaders of angels who lusted after the daughters of men. They descended to the summit of Mount Hermon, in the days of Jared, to acquire wives and lead men astray.<sup>[1]</sup> Sariel specifically taught men about the course of the moon.<sup>[2]</sup> Knibbs translation of the names of the Book of Enoch says it is possibly "light of God" or "moon of God" however he is listed as Araziel. His name is also listed as Arazyal and Asaradel in some 1 Enoch translations.<sup>[3]</sup> The name being a combination of sa'ar and 'God'. In the book of 2 Enoch he is usually listed as the fourth angel with the name of Samuil or Sariel.

The book of War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness lists the name of *Sariel* (שריאל, *officer of God*, an alternate spelling of Sariel) along with Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel as names to write upon the shields of soldiers in a tower during maneuvers (1QM 9,15). It is used on the shields of the third *Tower* (1QM 9,16).<sup>[4]</sup>

The angel *Suriyel* is briefly mentioned in the Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan as bearing Adam and Eve from the top of a high mountain to the Cave of Treasures.<sup>[5]</sup>

*"... bring what he had brought, and give it to Adam. And they did so, one by one. 6 And God commanded Suriyel and Salathiel to bear up Adam and Eve, and bring them down from the top of the high mountain, and ..."* - Bible. O. T. Apocryphal books. English First Book of Adam and Eve.

In the Ladder of Jacob *Sariel* is dispatched by the Lord to Jacob to explain to him the meaning of the dream about the ladder.

In the Talmud he is said to have taught Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha hygiene.Wikipedia:Citation needed The name Juriel is described as "An angel of the divine face or presence." which is why Sariel might be considered a possible name for Metatron.

Beta Israel writings call him "Suriel the Trumpeter" and "Suriel, the Angel of Death".Wikipedia:Citation needed

The book of Liber Juratus by Honorius of Thebes, has a number of translation which lists *Saryell* as being "the names of the angells of the .8. monthe that is sayde marquesnan" and *Saryel* as "the names of the angells of the .10. monthe (Tammuz) that is sayde thebeth be these". In a different translation *Sariell* is "The names of the angels of the eighth month, which is called marquesnan heshvan" and *Sariel* as "The names of the angels of the tenth month, which is called Tevet". The month of Heshvan marquesnan would make Sariels ruler Barfiell, or the month of Tevet would make the ruler Anaël.

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In The Lesser Key of Solomon it lists the dukes Astiel and Gediel as commanding Sariel by night. The book A dictionary of angels by Gustav Davidson and The complete book of devils and demons by Leonard Ashley list Sariel as a Fallen Angel.

The University of Michigan has a section devoted to Traditions of Magic in Late Antiquity, Protective Magic, Babylonian Demon Bowls. One clay bowl Seleucia-on-Tigris, 6th or 7th century lists Sariel twice:

*"I wrote all of the curses upon a new bowl of clay and I sent back the curses of those who cursed Negray daughter of Denday to their masters until they release and bless in the name of Sariel the angel and Barakiel the angel and in the name of Sariel and Barakiel you release from the curses of those who curse Negray daughter of Denday as a man is freed from the house of bondage and from the house of weapons amen amen selah"*

## Speculation

### As an angel of death

Judaic-Christian texts say Sariel is the angel of death attributed to the fifth angel Apollyon. Some Enoch translations for Sariel use Arazyal/Araziel/Asaradel which in its Anglo translation sounds very similar to Azrael. If Azrael is the same as Sariel he is one of the four Islamic angels in conjunction with Mikhail, Djibril, and Israfil. The name Azrael is listed in Muslim and Islamic theology as the angel of death "forever writing in a large book and forever erasing what he writes: what he writes is the birth of man, what he erases is the name of the man at death". We also see parallels in Rabbinical lore for *Sammael*, Falasha for *Suriel*, and Azrael in the Arabic. Wikipedia:Citation needed

### As the archangel Saraqael

Sariel is identified as being an angel similar to Saraqael, said in the Book of Enoch to be the fifth archangel, set over spirits who sin in the spirit, concerned with the fate of angels that violate divine law.<sup>[6]</sup> Before the identification of Sariel/Saraqael as the fifth archangel, however, the Book of Enoch identifies Sariel as one of the fallen host's "chiefs of tens."

## References

- [1] Enoch 6
- [2] Enoch 8
- [3] Angels and Demons (<http://www.palmyria.co.uk/superstition/angelsdemons.htm>)
- [4] War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness (War Rule), 1QM, Column 9, Lines 15-16
- [5] Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan 31:6
- [6] Enoch 20

## External links

- University of Michigan Demon Bowls Exhibit 37 (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/pap/magic/def2.display.html>), Kelsey Museum of Archaeology 19504

# Article Sources and Contributors

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# Azrael

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Not to be confused with Jewish people, Jacob, Israelites, or Palestine.

This article is about the angel of death. For other uses, see Azriel (disambiguation).

Not to be confused with Sir Azreal, a Knight of the Round Table.

**Azrael** is often identified with the Archangel of Death in some traditions and folklore but not in any religious texts. The name is sometimes attributed to the angel of retribution in Islamic theology and Sikhism but the name Azrael is not actually used in the Qur'an nor considered as a religious personification. The name Azrael is an English form of the Arabic name **ʿIzrāʾīl** (عزرائيل) or Azra'eil (عزرايل), the name traditionally attributed to the angel of death in some sects of Islam and Sikhism, as well as some Hebrew lore.<sup>[1][2]</sup> The Qur'an never uses this name, rather referring to *Malak al-Maut* (which translates directly as *angel of death*). Also spelled *Izrail*, *Azrin*, *Izrael*, *Azriel*, *Azrail*, *Ezraeil*, *Azraille*, *Azryel*, *Ozryel*, or *Azraa-eel*, the Chambers English dictionary uses the spelling *Azrael*. The name literally means *One Whom God Helps*, in an adaptive form of Hebrew.

## Background

Depending on the outlook and precepts of various religions in which he is a figure, Azrael may be portrayed as residing in the Third Heaven.<sup>[3]</sup> In one of his forms, he has four faces and four thousand wings, and his whole body consists of eyes and tongues, the number of which corresponds to the number of people inhabiting the Earth. He will be the last to die, recording and erasing constantly in a large book the names of men at birth and death, respectively.<sup>[4]</sup> He will receive the souls in the graves

## In Judaism

In Jewish mysticism, he is commonly referred to as "Azriel," not "Azrael." The Zohar (a holy book of the Jewish mystical tradition of Kabbalah), presents a positive depiction of Azriel. The Zohar says that Azriel receives the prayers of faithful people when they reach heaven, and also commands legions of heavenly angels. Accordingly, Azriel is associated with the South and is considered to be a high-ranking commander of God's angels. (Zohar 2:202b)

## In Christianity

There is no reference to Azrael in the Catholic Bible, and he is not considered a canonical character within Christianity. There is, however, a story in 2 Esdras (disallowed by the Catholic and Protestant Churches, but considered canonical in Eastern Orthodox teachings) which is part of the Apocrypha. 2 Esdras has the story of a scribe and judge named Ezra, also sometimes written "Azra" in different languages. Azra was visited by the Archangel Uriel and given a list of laws and punishments he was to adhere to and enforce as judge over his people. Azra was later recorded in the Apocrypha as having entered Heaven "without tasting death's taint". Depending on various religious views, it could be taken as Ezra ascending to angelic status. This would add the suffix "el" to his name, which denotes a heavenly being (e.g. Michael, Raphael, Uriel). Hence, it would be Ezrael/Azrael. This would put him more in accordance to an angel of punishment, akin to the views of the Jean Paul Valley character (which was also named Azrael). Later books also state a scribe named Salathiel, who was quoted as saying, "I, Salathiel, who is also Ezra". Again, depending on certain views of Christian spirituality, this could be seen as angelic influence from Ezrael/Azrael on Salathiel, though this view of spirituality is neither confirmed nor denied by the Catholic Church.

While 2 Esdras is not considered canonical by most Christian views, several quotes from the book are used for the Requiem Anternam, showing that it still has some relevance to traditional Christian view points.

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A story from *Folk-lore of the Holy Land: Moslem, Christian and Jewish* by J. E. Hanauer tells of a soldier with a gambling addiction avoiding Azrael. Because the soldier goes to Jesus and asks for help, then later must see Jesus and repent to be allowed back in Heaven, this story can be seen as a Christian account of Azrael. However, this story does not specify whether Azrael is an angel of death, or an angel of punishment.

## In Islam

In some cultures and sects, Azrael (also pronounced as *ʿIzrāʾīl* /*Azriel*) is the name referring to the Angel of Death by some Arabic speakers. The name is mentioned in a few Muslim books although some Muslims argue that it has no basis of reference. Wikipedia:Citation needed Along with Jibrīl, Mikhāʾīl, Isrāfīl and other angels, the Angel of Death is believed by Muslims to be one of the archangels.<sup>[5]</sup> The Qur'an states that the angel of death takes the soul of every person and returns it to God.<sup>[6]</sup> However, the Qur'an makes it clear that only God knows when and where each person will be taken by death.<sup>[7]</sup> Several Muslim traditions recount meetings between the Angel of Death and the prophets, the most famous being a conversation between the Angel of Death and Moses. He watches over the dying, separates the soul from the body, and receives the spirits of the dead in Muslim belief. Rather than merely representing death personified, the Angel of Death is usually described in Islamic sources as subordinate to the will of God "with the most profound reverence."<sup>[8]</sup> However, there is no reference within the Qur'an or any Islamic teachings giving the angel of death the name of Azrael.

Some have also disputed the usage of the name Azrael as it is not used in the Qur'an itself. Wikipedia:Citation needed However, the same can be said about many Prophets and angels who are also not mentioned by name in the Qur'an.

Riffian (Berber) men of Morocco had the custom of shaving the head but leaving a single lock of hair on either the crown, left, or right side of the head, so that the angel Azrael is able "to pull them up to heaven on the Last Day."<sup>[9]</sup>

## In Sikhism

In Sikh scriptures written by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, God (Waheguru) sends Azrael to people who are unfaithful and unrepentant for their sins. Azrael appears on Earth in human form and hits sinful people on the head with his scythe to kill them and extract their souls from their bodies. He then brings their souls to hell, and makes sure that they get the punishment that Waheguru decrees once he judges them. This would portray him as more of an avenging angel, or angel of retribution, rather than a simple angel of death. It is unknown which story of Azrael this view is taken from. However, it is just a poetic description to warn the people of earth that if they continue committing sins they would be punished accordingly and Waheguru would not be lenient to anyone. The Sikh Gurus or the Guru Granth Sahib does not support the existence of an angel of death. It firmly believes that there is only a single power that rules the universe, the Almighty. His power has no limits and he does not require the assistance of anyone to carry out his work. The whole universe is working in accordance to a set of rules set by him and there is no one other than him to preside over it.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Azrael in popular culture

- Azrael is featured in the video game *Darksiders*.
- Azrael is a character in Kevin Smith's comedy *Dogma*, played by Jason Lee. He encourages a pair of fallen angels (Matt Damon and Ben Affleck) to reenter Heaven in defiance of God.
- The Asrael Symphony for large orchestra in C minor (Czech: „Asrael“, Symfonie pro velký orchestr C moll), Op. 27 (1905–1906), was written by Josef Suk in memory of his father-in-law and teacher, Antonín Dvořák (died 1904), and his wife (Dvořák's daughter) Otilie Suková (née Dvořáková) (died 1905).
- In the book *Reaper Man* of Terry Pratchett's Discworld series, Azrael is a god-like being.
- Azrael is the title of a song by the American progressive metal band Crimson Glory, from their debut album entitled *Crimson Glory* (album), released in 1986.

- Azrael is mentioned in G. K. Chesterton's poem Lepanto. Summoned by Mahound along with Aerial and Ammon.
- Azrael is a song of the album In Death Reborn released by Army of the Pharaohs (2014)

## References

- [1] Davidson, Gustav (1967), *A Dictionary of Angels, Including The Fallen Angels* ([http://books.google.com/books/about/A\\_dictionary\\_of\\_angels.html?id=Ed7yHWuTEewC](http://books.google.com/books/about/A_dictionary_of_angels.html?id=Ed7yHWuTEewC)), Entry: **Azrael**, pp. 64, 65, Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 66-19757, ISBN 9780029070505
- [2] Shri Guru Granth Sahib, Section 07 - Raag Gauree - Part 165, "*Azraa-eel, the Angel of Death, shall crush them like sesame seeds in the oil-press.*" (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/skh/granth/gr07.htm>)
- [3] Davidson, Gustav (1967), *A Dictionary of Angels, Including The Fallen Angels* ([http://books.google.com/books/about/A\\_dictionary\\_of\\_angels.html?id=Ed7yHWuTEewC](http://books.google.com/books/about/A_dictionary_of_angels.html?id=Ed7yHWuTEewC)), Entry: **Third Heaven**, p. 288, Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 66-19757, ISBN 9780029070505
- [4] Hastings, James, Selbie, John A. (Editors) (2003), *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics Part 3*, Kessinger Publishing, 2003, ISBN 0-7661-3671-X
- [5] *Historical Dictionary of Prophets in Islam and Judaism* ([http://books.google.com/books/about/Historical\\_Dictionary\\_of\\_Prophets\\_in\\_Isl.html?id=6aTXAAAAMAAJ](http://books.google.com/books/about/Historical_Dictionary_of_Prophets_in_Isl.html?id=6aTXAAAAMAAJ)), Brannon M. Wheeler (2002), *Azrael*, Scarecrow Press, ISBN 9780810843059
- [6] Qur'an 32:11
- [7] Qur'an 31:34
- [8] Hanauer, J.E. (1907), *Folk-lore of the Holy Land: Muslim, Christian and Jewish*, Chapter V: The Angel of Death (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/asia/flhl/flhl30.htm>), at sacred-texts.com (<http://www.sacred-texts.com>)
- [9] El Maghreg: 1200 Miles' Ride Through Morocco, Hugh Edward Millington Stutfield pppp
- [10] <http://angels.about.com/od/AngelsReligiousTexts/p/Meet-The-Archangel-Azrael.htm>



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Saaqael (Sarakiel, Suriel) – In Enoch I, an angel of the presence.

<http://evp.paranomalo.us/2011/10/13/angels-their-names-and-meaning-s-z/>

Suriel - angel of healing whose name means "God's command."

[http://www.angelsghosts.com/angel\\_names](http://www.angelsghosts.com/angel_names)

Sariel a.k.a. Suriel, Suriyel, *Seraquel*, Sarakiel, Uriel, and Zerachiel

<http://hafapea.com/angelpages/angels6.html>

An angel set over the beasts is mentioned in Hermas' "Visions," iv. 2; his name is Thegri (see Hekalot, vi.) (Turiel = "bull-god," Jerome on Hab. i. 14). In Abraham of Granada's "Berit Menuḥah," p. 37, are mentioned the angel Jeḥiel (Hayyel?), set over the wild beasts; 'Anpiel, over the birds; Hariel (Behemiel), over the tame beasts; Shaḳḳziel, over the water-insects; Dagiēl, over the fish; Ilaniel, over the fruit-bearing trees; Seraḳel, over the trees not bearing fruit.

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1521-angelology>

Most identify with I. זָהַר = *give light, enlighten, instruct, admonish*; this possible, but not certain, meaning *shine* is late in Hebrew; usual sense as given below is not *enlighten, illumine* mentally, but *warn*; see also construction with two accusatives [Exodus 18:20](#));

<http://biblehub.com/hebrew/2094.htm>

### Strong's Concordance

**zahar: admonish**

Original Word: זָהַר

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: zahar

Phonetic Spelling: (zaw-har')

Short Definition: admonish

<http://biblehub.com/hebrew/2094.htm> (as the previous source)

### Zahariel - Name's Meaning of Zahariel - Name Doctor

[www.name-doctor.com/name-zahariel-meaning-of-zahariel-39411.html](http://www.name-doctor.com/name-zahariel-meaning-of-zahariel-39411.html) ▼

**zahariel**. Masculine. OTHER SCRIPTS: **hebrew** (זַהַרְיֵאל) greek (Ζαριήλ) ... MEANING: this name derives from the **hebrew** "zhariel" meaning "command of god".

### Sariel - Name's Meaning of Sariel - Name Doctor

[www.name-doctor.com/name-sariel-meaning-of-sariel-34797.html](http://www.name-doctor.com/name-sariel-meaning-of-sariel-34797.html) ▼

... MEANING: this name derives from the **hebrew** "zhariel" meaning "command of ... **hebrew**; english; greek. Related names. VARIANTS. **hebrew**: zhariel, **zahariel** ...

### Zhariel - Name's Meaning of Zhariel - Name Doctor

[www.name-doctor.com/name-zhariel-meaning-of-zhariel-39410.html](http://www.name-doctor.com/name-zhariel-meaning-of-zhariel-39410.html) ▼

... MEANING: this name derives from the **hebrew** "zhariel" meaning "command of god".  
... Usage. **hebrew**. Related names. VARIANTS. **hebrew**: sariel, **zahariel** ...

### Angels V, W, X, Y, Z - Hafapea's Universe

[hafapea.com/angelpages/angels7.html](http://hafapea.com/angelpages/angels7.html) ▼

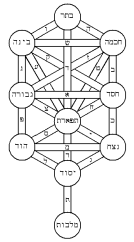
Yahriel a.k.a. Yehra, Yarheil, and Zachariel (**Hebrew**, yerah, "moon") - a .... **Zahariel** ("brightness") - a great angel in **Jewish** mysticism who is invoked to help one ...

# Zohar

This article is about the Jewish literary work. For the village in southern Israel, see Zohar, Israel. For the proper name, see Zohar (name). For the album by John Zorn, see Zohar (album). For the music band, see Zohar (band).

Part of a series on

Kabbalah



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e<sup>[1]</sup>

The **Zohar** (Hebrew: **זוהר**, lit. *Splendor* or *Radiance*) is the foundational work in the literature of Jewish mystical thought known as Kabbalah.<sup>[2]</sup> It is a group of books including commentary on the mystical aspects of the Torah (the five books of Moses) and scriptural interpretations as well as material on mysticism, mythical cosmogony, and mystical psychology. The Zohar contains a discussion of the nature of God, the origin and structure of the universe, the nature of souls, redemption, the relationship of Ego to Darkness and "true self" to "The Light of God", and the relationship between the "universal energy" and man. Its scriptural exegesis can be considered an esoteric form of the Rabbinic literature known as Midrash, which elaborates on the Torah.

The Zohar is mostly written in what has been described as an exalted, eccentric style of Aramaic. Aramaic was the day-to-day language of Israel in the Second Temple period (539 BCE – 70 CE), was the original language of large sections of the biblical books of Daniel and Ezra, and is the main language of the Talmud.<sup>[3]</sup>

The Zohar first appeared in Spain in the 13th century, and was published by a Jewish writer named Moses de Leon. De Leon ascribed the work to Shimon bar Yochai ("Rashbi"), a rabbi of the 2nd century during the Roman persecution who, according to Jewish legend, hid in a cave for thirteen years studying the Torah and was inspired by the Prophet Elijah to write the Zohar. This accords with the traditional claim by adherents that Kabbalah is the concealed part of the Oral Torah.

While the traditional majority view in religious Judaism has been that the teachings of Kabbalah were revealed by God to Biblical figures such as Abraham and Moses and were then transmitted orally from the Biblical era until its redaction by Shimon ben Yochai, modern academic analysis of the Zohar, such as that by the 20th century religious historian Gershom Scholem, has theorized that De Leon was the actual author. The view of non-Orthodox Jewish denominations generally conforms to this latter view, and as such, most non-Orthodox Jews have long viewed the Zohar as pseudepigraphy and apocrypha while sometimes accepting that its contents may have meaning for modern Judaism. Jewish prayerbooks edited by non-Orthodox Jews may therefore contain excerpts from the Zohar and other kabbalistic works,<sup>[4]</sup> even if the editors do not literally believe that they are oral traditions from the time of Moses.

There are people of religions besides Judaism, or even those without religious affiliation, who delve in the Zohar out of curiosity, or as a technology for people who are seeking meaningful and practical answers about the meaning of their lives, the purpose of creation and existence and their relationships with the laws of nature, and so forth;

however from the perspective of traditional, rabbinic Judaism,<sup>[5][6]</sup> and by the Zohar's own statements,<sup>[7]</sup> the purpose of the Zohar is to help the Jewish people through and out of the Exile and to infuse the Torah and mitzvot (Judaic commandments) with the wisdom of Kabbalah for its Jewish readers.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Etymology

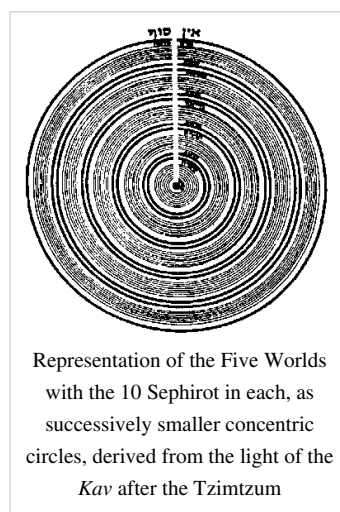
In the Bible the word "Zohar" appears in the vision of Ezekiel Chapter 8 Verse 2 and is usually translated as meaning radiance or light. It appears again in Daniel Chapter 12 Verse 3, "The wise ones will shine like the radiance of the firmament".

## Authorship

### Initial view

Suspensions aroused by the facts that the Zohar was discovered by one person, and that it refers to historical events of the post-Talmudic period while purporting to be from an earlier time, caused the authorship to be questioned from the outset. Joseph Jacobs and Isaac Broyde, in their article on the Zohar for the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia, cite a story involving the noted Kabbalist Isaac of Acco, who is supposed to have heard directly from the widow of de Leon that her husband proclaimed authorship by Shimon bar Yochai for profit:

A story tells that after the death of Moses de Leon, a rich man of Avila named Joseph offered Moses' widow (who had been left without any means of supporting herself) a large sum of money for the original from which her husband had made the copy. She confessed that her husband himself was the author of the work. She had asked him several times, she said, why he had chosen to credit his own teachings to another, and he had always answered that doctrines put into the mouth of the miracle-working Shimon bar Yochai would be a rich source of profit. The story indicates that shortly after its appearance the work was believed by some to have been written by Moses de Leon.



Representation of the Five Worlds with the 10 Sephirot in each, as successively smaller concentric circles, derived from the light of the Kav after the Tzimtzum

However, Isaac evidently ignored the woman's alleged confession in favor of the testimony of Joseph ben Todros and of Jacob, a pupil of Moses de León, both of whom assured him on oath that the work was not written by de Leon. Over time, the general view in the Jewish community came to be one of acceptance of Moses de Leon's claims, with the Zohar seen as an authentic book of mysticism passed down from the 2nd century.

The Zohar spread among the Jews with remarkable swiftness. Scarcely fifty years had passed since its appearance in Spain before it was quoted by many Kabbalists, including the Italian mystical writer Menahem Recanati and by Todros Abulafia. Certain Jewish communities, however, such as the Dor Daim, Andalusian (Western Sefardic or Spanish and Portuguese Jews), and some Italian communities, never accepted it as authentic.

### Late Middle Ages

By the 15th century, its authority in the Spanish Jewish community was such that Joseph ibn Shem-Tov drew from it arguments in his attacks against Maimonides, and even representatives of non-mystical Jewish thought began to assert its sacredness and invoke its authority in the decision of some ritual questions. In Jacobs' and Broyde's view, they were attracted by its glorification of man, its doctrine of immortality, and its ethical principles, which they saw as more in keeping with the spirit of Talmudic Judaism than are those taught by the philosophers, and which was held in contrast to the view of Maimonides and his followers, who regarded man as a fragment of the universe whose immortality is dependent upon the degree of development of his active intellect. The Zohar instead declared Man to



be the lord of the creation, whose immortality is solely dependent upon his morality.

Conversely, Elijah Delmedigo (c.1458 – c.1493), in his *Bechinat ha-Dat* endeavored to show that the Zohar could not be attributed to Shimon bar Yochai, arguing that if it were his work, the Zohar would have been mentioned by the Talmud, as has been the case with other works of the Talmudic period, that had bar Yochai known by divine revelation the hidden meaning of the precepts, his decisions on Jewish law from the Talmudic period would have been adopted by the Talmud, that it would not contain the names of rabbis who lived at a later period than that of Simeon; and that if the Kabbalah was a revealed doctrine, there would have been no divergence of opinion among the Kabbalists concerning the mystic interpretation of the precepts.<sup>[9]</sup>

Believers in the authenticity of the Zohar countered that the lack of references to the work in Jewish literature were because bar Yochai did not commit his teachings to writing but transmitted them orally to his disciples over generations until finally the doctrines were embodied in the Zohar. They found it unsurprising that bar Yochai should have foretold future happenings or made references to historical events of the post-Talmudic period.

The authenticity of the Zohar was accepted by such 16th century Jewish luminaries as R' Yosef Karo (d.1575), R' Moses Isserles (d. 1572), and R' Solomon Luria (d.1574), who wrote that Jewish law (Halacha) follows the Zohar, except where the Zohar is contradicted by the Babylonian Talmud.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Enlightenment period

Debate continued over the generations; Delmedigo's arguments were echoed by Leon of Modena (d.1648) in his *Ari Nohem*, and a work devoted to the criticism of the Zohar, *Mitpachas Sefarim*, was written by Jacob Emden (d.1776), who, waging war against the remaining adherents of the Sabbatai Zevi movement (in which Zevi, a false messiah and Jewish apostate, cited Messianic prophecies from the Zohar as proof of his legitimacy), endeavored to show that the book on which Zevi based his doctrines was a forgery. Emden argued that the Zohar misquotes passages of Scripture; misunderstands the Talmud; contains some ritual observances which were ordained by later rabbinical authorities; mentions The Crusades against Muslims (who did not exist in the 2nd century); uses the expression "*esnoga*," a Portuguese term for "synagogue"; and gives a mystical explanation of the Hebrew vowel points, which were not introduced until long after the Talmudic period.

The influence of the Zohar and the Kabbalah in Yemen, where it was introduced in the 17th century, gave rise to the *Dor Daim* movement, whose adherents believed that the core beliefs of Judaism were rapidly diminishing in favor of the mysticism of the Kabbalah. The *Dor Daim* movement, led by Rabbi Yiḥyah Qafih, emerged as a recognizable force in the later part of the 19th century, and considered the Kabbalists to be irrational, anti-scientific, and anti-progressive in attitude. Its objects were to combat the influence of the Zohar and subsequent developments in modern Kabbalah, which were then pervasive in Yemenite Jewish life, to restore what they believed to be a rationalistic approach to Judaism rooted in authentic sources, and to safeguard the older ("*Baladi*") tradition of Yemenite Jewish observance that they believed to be based on this approach. Especially controversial were the views of the Dor Daim on the Zohar, as presented in *Milhamoth Hashem* (Wars of the Lord),<sup>[11]</sup> written by Rabbi Qafih. A group of Jerusalem rabbis published an attack on Rabbi Qafih under the title of *Emunat Hashem* (Faith of the Lord), and measures were taken to ostracize members of the movement.

In the Ashkenazi community of Eastern Europe, later religious authorities including the Vilna Gaon (d.1797) and Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (d.1812) (The Baal HaTanya) believed in the authenticity of the Zohar.

## Contemporary religious view



Title page of the first printed edition of the Zohar, Mantua, 1558. Library of Congress.

Most of Orthodox Judaism holds that the teachings of Kabbalah were transmitted from teacher to teacher, in a long and continuous chain, from the Biblical era until its redaction by Shimon ben Yochai. Many (most?) Wikipedia:Manual of Style/Words to watch#Unsupported attributions accept fully the claims that the Kabbalah's teachings are in essence a revelation from God to the Biblical patriarch Abraham, Moses and other ancient figures, but were never printed and made publicly available until the time of the Zohar's medieval publication. Wikipedia:Citation needed The greatest acceptance of this sequence of events is held within Haredi Judaism. Some Wikipedia:Manual of Style/Words to watch#Unsupported attributions claim the tradition that Rabbi Shimon wrote that the concealment of the Zohar would last for exactly 1200 years from the time of destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 CE and so before revealing the Zohar in 1270, Moses De Leon uncovered the manuscripts in a cave in Israel. R' Yechiel Michel Epstein (d.1908), and R' Yisrael Meir Kagan (d.1933) both believed in the authenticity of the Zohar.

Within Orthodox Judaism the traditional view that Shimon bar Yochai was the author is maintained. R' Menachem Mendel Kasher in a 1958 article in the periodical *Sinai* argues against the claims of Gershom Scholem that the Zohar was written in the 13th Century by R' Moses De Leon. He writes:

1. Many statements in the works of the Rishonim (medieval commentators who preceded De Leon) refer to Medrashim that we are not aware of. He writes that these are in fact references to the Zohar. This has also been pointed out by R' David Luria in his work "Kadmus Sefer Ha'Zohar."
2. The Zohar's major opponent Elijah Delmedigo refers to the Zohar as having existed for "only" 300 years. Even he agrees that it was extant before the time of R' Moses De Leon.
3. He cites a document from R' Yitchok M' Acco who was sent by the Ramban to investigate the Zohar. The document brings witnesses that attest to the existence of the manuscript.
4. It is impossible to accept that R' Moshe De Leon managed to forge a work of the scope of the Zohar (1700 pages) within a period of six years as Scholem claims.
5. A comparison between the Zohar and De Leon's other works show major stylistic differences. Although he made use of his manuscript of the Zohar, many ideas presented in his works contradict or ignore ideas mentioned in the Zohar. (Luria also points this out)
6. Many of the Midrashic works achieved their final redaction in the Geonic period. Some of the anachronistic terminology of the Zohar may date from that time.
7. Out of the thousands of words used in the Zohar, Scholem finds two anachronistic terms and nine cases of ungrammatical usage of words. This proves that the majority of the Zohar was written within the accepted time frame and only a small amount was added later (in the Geonic period as mentioned).
8. Some hard to understand terms may be attributed to acronyms or codes. He finds corollaries to such a practice in other ancient manuscripts.
9. The "borrowings" from medieval commentaries may be explained in a simple manner. It is not unheard of that a note written on the side of a text should on later copying be added into the main part of the text. The Talmud itself has Geonic additions from such a cause. Certainly this would apply to the Zohar to which there did not exist other

manuscripts to compare it with.

10. He cites an ancient manuscript that refers to a book *Sod Gadol* that seems to in fact be the Zohar.

Concerning the Zohar's lack of knowledge of the land of Israel, Scholem bases this on the many references to a city *Kaputkia* (Cappadocia) which he states was situated in Turkey not in Israel. A city by this name located in Israel does appear, however, in Targum Onkelos, Targum Yonatan, Mishnah, Babylonian Talmud and several Midrashim.

Another theory as to the authorship of the Zohar is that it was transmitted like the Talmud before it was transcribed: as an oral tradition reapplied to changing conditions and eventually recorded. This view believes that the Zohar was not written by Shimon bar Yochai, but is a holy work because it consisted of his principles.

Belief in the authenticity of the Zohar among Orthodox Jewish movements can be seen in various forms online today. Featured on Chabad.org is the multi-part article, *The Zohar's Mysterious Origins* by Moshe Miller, which views the Zohar as the product of multiple generations of scholarship but defends the overall authenticity of the text and argues against many of the textual criticisms from Scholem and Tishby. The Zohar figures prominently in the mysticism of Chabad. Another leading Orthodox online outlet, Aish.com, also shows broad acceptance of the Zohar by referencing it in many of its articles. Wikipedia:No original research

Some Wikipedia:Manual of Style/Words to watch#Unsupported attributions in Modern Orthodox Judaism reject the above view as naive. Some Orthodox Jews accept the earlier rabbinic position that the Zohar was a work written in the Middle Medieval Period by Moses de Leon, but argue that since it is obviously based on earlier materials, it can still be held to be authentic, but not as authoritative or without error as others within Orthodoxy might hold. Wikipedia:Citation needed

Jews in non-Orthodox Jewish denominations accept the conclusions of historical academic studies on the Zohar and other kabbalistic texts. As such, most non-Orthodox Jews have long viewed the Zohar as pseudepigraphy and apocrypha. Nonetheless, many accepted that some of its contents had meaning for modern Judaism. Siddurim edited by non-Orthodox Jews often have excerpts from the Zohar and other kabbalistic works, e.g. Siddur Sim Shalom edited by Jules Harlow, even though the editors are not kabbalists.

In recent years there has been a growing willingness of non-Orthodox Jews to study the Zohar, and a growing minority have a position that is similar to the Modern Orthodox position described above. This seems pronounced among Jews who follow the path of Jewish Renewal. Wikipedia:Citation needed

## Modern critical views

In the mid-20th century, the Jewish historian Gershom Scholem contended that de Leon himself was the most likely author of the Zohar. Among other things, Scholem noticed the Zohar's frequent errors in Aramaic grammar, its suspicious traces of Spanish words and sentence patterns, and its lack of knowledge of the land of Israel. Yeshayahu Leibowitz, noted professor of philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, claimed that "It is clear that the Zohar was written by de Leon as it is clear that Theodore Herzl wrote *Medinat HaYehudim* (The Jewish State)."

Other Jewish scholars have also suggested the possibility that the Zohar was written by a group of people, including de Leon. This theory generally presents de Leon as having been the leader of a mystical school, whose collective effort resulted in the Zohar.

Even if de Leon wrote the text, the entire contents of the book may not be fraudulent. Parts of it may be based on older works, and it was a common practice to ascribe the authorship of a document to an ancient rabbi in order to give the document more weight. It is possible that Moses de Leon considered himself inspired to write this text.

In the Encyclopaedia Judaica article written by Professor Gershom Scholem of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem there is an extensive discussion of the sources cited in the Zohar. Scholem views the author of the Zohar as having based the Zohar on a wide variety of pre-existing Jewish sources, while at the same time inventing a number of fictitious works that the Zohar supposedly quotes, e.g., the Sifra de-Adam, the Sifra de-Hanokh, the Sifra di-Shelomo Malka, the Sifra de-Rav Hamnuna Sava, the Sifra de-Rav Yeiva Sava, the Sifra de-Aggadeta, the Raza

de-Razin and many others.

Scholem's views are widely held as accurate among historians of the Kabbalah, but like all textual historical investigations, are not uncritically accepted; most of the following conclusions are still accepted as accurate, although academic analysis of the original texts has progressed dramatically since Scholem's ground-breaking research. Scholars that continue to research the background of the Zohar include Yehudah Liebes (who wrote his doctorate degree for Scholem on the subject of a *Dictionary of the Vocabulary of the Zohar* in 1976), and Daniel C. Matt, also a student of Scholem, who is currently reconstructing a critical edition of the Zohar based on original unpublished manuscripts.

While many original ideas in the Zohar are presented as being from (fictitious) Jewish mystical works, many ancient and clearly rabbinic mystical teachings are presented without their real, identifiable sources being named. Academic studies of the Zohar show that many of its ideas are based in the Talmud, various works of midrash, and earlier Jewish mystical works. Scholem writes:

The writer had expert knowledge of the early material and he often used it as a foundation for his expositions, putting into it variations of his own. His main sources were the Babylonian Talmud, the complete Midrash Rabbah, the Midrash Tanhuma, and the two Pesiktot (Pesikta De-Rav Kahana or Pesikta Rabbati), the Midrash on Psalms, the Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer, and the Targum Onkelos. Generally speaking they are not quoted exactly, but translated into the peculiar style of the Zohar and summarized....

... Less use is made of the halakhic Midrashim, the Jerusalem Talmud, and the other Targums, nor of the Midrashim like the Aggadat Shir ha-Shirim, the Midrash on Proverbs, and the Alfabet de-R. Akiva. It is not clear whether the author used the Yalkut Shimoni, or whether he knew the sources of its aggadah separately. Of the smaller Midrashim he used the Heikhalot Rabbati, the Alfabet de-Ben Sira, the Sefer Zerubabel, the Baraita de-Ma'aseh Bereshit, [and many others]...

The author of the Zohar drew upon the Bible commentaries written by medieval rabbis, including Rashi, Abraham ibn Ezra, David Kimhi and even authorities as late as Nahmanides and Maimonides. Scholem gives a variety of examples of such borrowings.

The Zohar draws upon early mystical texts such as the Sefer Yetzirah and the Bahir, and the early medieval writings of the Hasidei Ashkenaz.

Another influence on the Zohar which Scholem identified, was a circle of Kabbalists in Castile who dealt with the appearance of an evil side emanating from within the world of the sephirot. Scholem saw this dualism of good and evil within the Godhead as a kind of "gnostic" inclination within Kabbalah, and as a predecessor of the *Sitra Ahra* (the other, evil side) in the Zohar. The main text of the Castile circle, the Treatise on the Left Emanation, was written by Jacob ha-Cohen in around 1265.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Contents

The *Tikunei haZohar* was first printed in Mantua in 1557. The main body of the Zohar was printed in Cremona in 1558 (a one-volume edition), in Mantua in 1558-1560 (a three-volume edition), and in Salonika in 1597 (a two-volume edition). Each of these editions included somewhat different texts. When they were printed there were many partial manuscripts in circulation which were not available to the first printers. These were later printed as "Zohar Chadash" (lit. "New Zohar"), but *Zohar Chadash* actually contains parts that pertain to the Zohar, as well as *Tikunim* (plural of *Tikun*, "Repair") that are akin to *Tikunei haZohar*, as described below. The term "Zohar," in usage, may refer to just the first Zohar collection, with or without the applicable sections of Zohar Chadash, or to the entire Zohar and Tikunim. Citations referring to the Zohar conventionally follow the volume and page numbers of the Mantua edition. Volumes II and III begin their numbering anew, so citation can be made by *parashah* and page number (e.g. *Zohar: Nasso* 127a), or by volume and page number (e.g. *Zohar* III:127a).

## Zohar

The earlier part of the Zohar, also known as *Zohar Al haTorah* (Zohar on the Torah, זוהר על התורה) or *Midrash Rashbi*, contains several smaller "books," as described below.

This book was published in three volumes: Volume 1 on *Bereishit* (Genesis), Volume 2 on *Shemot* (Exodus) and Volume 3 on *Viyikra*, *Bamidbar* and *Devarim* (Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). At the start of the first volume is printed a "Preface to the Book of the Zohar" (pages 1a to 14b). After this introduction is the Zohar's commentary on most of the parashahs of the Torah. There is Zohar on all of the parashahs of *Bereishit* through the book of *Vayikra*; in *Bamidbar* there is no Zohar on the last two parashahs: *Matot* (although on this parashah there is a small paragraph on page 259b) and *Mas'ei*. In *Devarim* there is no Zohar on *Devarim*, *Re'eh*, *Ki-Tavo*, *Nitzavim*, and *veZot haBerakhah*. Printed within these three volumes are these smaller books.<sup>[13]</sup>

### *Sifra diTzni'uta*/Book of the Hidden (ספרא דצניעותא)

This small "book," three pages long, (Volume 2, *parashat Teruma* pages 176b-179a) -- the name of which, "Book of the Hidden," attests to its veiled and cryptic character—is considered by some an important and concentrated part of the Zohar. Its enumerations and anatomical references are reminiscent of the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the latter being *remazim* (hints) of divine characteristics.

Externally it is a commentary on seminal verses in *Bereishit* (and therefore in the version published in Cremona it is printed in *parashat Bereishit*). It has five chapters. Intrinsically it includes, according to Rashbi, the foundation of Kabbalah, which is explained at length in the Zohar and in the books of Kabbalah after it. Rabbi Shalom Buzaglo said, "Rashbi -- may his merit protect us -- said (Zohar Vol. 2, page 176a), '*Sifra diTzni'uta* is five chapters which are included in a Great Palace and fill the entire earth,' meaning, these five paragraphs include all the wisdom of Kabbalah... for, *Sifra diTzni'uta* is the 'little that holds the much,' brevity with wonderful and glorious wisdom."<sup>[14]</sup>

There are those who attribute *Sifra diTzni'uta* to the patriarch Yaakov; however, Rabbi Eliezer Tzvi of Kamarno in his book *Zohar Chai* wrote,<sup>[15]</sup> "*Sifra diTzni'uta* was composed by Rashbi... and he arranged [it] from baraitas which were transmitted to Tannaim from Mount Sinai from the days of Moshe, similar to the way Rabeinu HaKadosh arranged the six orders of Mishnah from that which was repeated from before."

### *Idra Rabba*/The Great Assembly (אדרת רבא)

The *Idra Rabba* is found in the Zohar Vol. 3, *parashat Nasso* (pp. 127b-145a), and its name means, "The Great Assembly." "*Idra*" is a sitting-place of sages, usually circular, and the word "*Rabba*/Great" differentiates this section from the section *Idra Zuta*, which was an assembly of fewer sages that occurred later, as mentioned below.

*Idra Rabba* contains the discussion of nine of Rashbi's friends, who gathered together to discuss great and deep secrets of Kabbalah. The nine are: Rabbi Elazar his son, Rabbi Abba, Rabbi Yehuda, Rabbi Yossi bar Yaakov, Rabbi Yitzchak, Rabbi Chezkiyah bar Rav, Rabbi Chiyya, Rabbi Yossi and Rabbi Yisa. After the opening of the discussion by Rashbi, the sages rise, one after the other, and lecture on the secret of Divinity, while Rashbi adds to and responds to their words. The lectures in this section mainly explain the words of the *Sifra diTzni'uta*, in a similar manner as the Gemara explains the Mishnah.

As described in the *Idra Rabba*, before the *Idra* disjourned, three of the students died: Rabbi Yossi bar Yaakov, Rabbi Chezkiyah bar Rav, and Rabbi Yisa. As it is told, these students filled up with Godly light and therefore journeyed to the eternal world after their deaths. The remaining students saw their friends being carried away by angels. Rabbi Shimon said some words and they were calmed. He shouted out, "Perhaps, God forbid, a decree has been passed upon us to be punished, for through us has been revealed that which has not been revealed since the time Moshe stood on Mount Sinai!" At that instant a heavenly voice emerged and said, "Fortunate are you Rabbi Shimon! and fortunate is your portion and the portion of the friends who remain alive with you! For it has been revealed to you that which has not been revealed to all the upper hosts."<sup>[16]</sup>

### *Idra Zuta*/The Smaller Assembly (אדרת זוטא)

The *Idra Zuta* is found in the Zohar Vol. 3, *parashat Haazinu* (p. 287b to 296b), and is called "*Idra Zuta*," which

means, "The Smaller Assembly," distinguishing it from the aforementioned Greater Assembly, the *Idra Rabba*. In the *Idra Zuta*, Rashbi's colleagues convene again, this time seven in number, after the three mentioned above died. In the *Idra Zuta* the *Chevraya Kadisha* are privileged to hear teachings from Rashbi which conclude the words which were explained in the *Idra Rabba*.

### ***Ra`aya Meheimna/The Faithful Shepherd* (רע"א מהימנא)**

The book *Ra`aya Meheimna*, the title of which means "The Faithful Shepherd," and which is by far the largest "book" included in the book of the Zohar, is what Moshe, the "Faithful Shepherd," teaches and reveals to Rashbi and his friends, who include Tannaim and Amoraim. In this assembly of Holy Friends, which took place in the Beit Midrash of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, secrets of and revelations on mitzvot of the Torah are explained and clarified — roots and deep meanings of mitzvot. Since it deals with mitzvot, from *Ra`aya Meheimna* it is possible to learn very much about the ways of the halakhic rulings of the Rabbis.

*Ra`aya Meheimna* is distributed over several *parashiyot* throughout the Zohar. Part of it is known and even printed on separate pages, and part of it is weaved into the body of the Zohar. *Ra`aya Meheimna* is found in Vols. 2 and 3 of the Zohar, but is not found explicitly in Vol. 1. Several great rabbis and sages have tried to find the *Ra`aya Meheimna*, which originally is a vast book on all the 613 mitzvot, and arrange it according the order of positive commandments and negative commandments, and even print it as a book on its own.

In the lessons at the end of the Zohar, *Ra`aya Meheimna* is sometimes referred to as "*Chibra Kadma'ah*" — "the preceding book."

Regarding the importance of *Ra`aya Meheimna*, Rabbi Moshe Cordovero said, "Know that this book, which is called *Ra`aya Meheimna*, which Rashbi made with the tzadikim who are in Gan Eden, was a repair of the Shekhinah, and an aid and support for it in the exile, for there is no aid or support for the Shekhinah besides the secrets of the Torah... And everything that he says here of the secrets and the concepts—it is all with the intention of unifying the Shekhinah and aiding it during the exile."<sup>[17]</sup>

### ***Midrash haNe`elam/The Hidden Midrash* (מדרש הנעלם)**

*Midrash haNe`elam* is located within the body of the Zohar (*parashat Vayera*, *Chayei Sarah*, *Toldot*) and the Zohar Chadash (pp. 2b-30b; 46b-47b (in the Zohar Chadash edition by Rav Reuven Margoliot), and in *parashat Balak*, *Ki Teitze*, and the entire Zohar Chadash on *Shir haShirim*, *Ruth*, and *Eikah*.)

According to Ramaz, it is fit to be called *Midrash haNe`elam* because "its topic is mostly the *neshamah* (an upper level of soul), the source of which is in *Beri'ah*, which is the place of the upper Gan Eden; and it is written in the *Pardes* that drash is in *Beri'ah*... and the revealed midrash is the secret of externality, and *Midrash haNe`elam* is the secret of internality, which is the *neshamah*. And this derush is founded on the *neshamah*; its name befits it -- *Midrash haNe`elam*."<sup>[18]</sup>

The language of *Midrash haNe`elam* is sometimes Hebrew, sometimes Aramaic, and sometimes both mixed. Unlike the body of the Zohar, its drashas are short and not long. Also, the topics it discusses — the work of Creation, the nature the soul, the days of Mashiach, and *Olam Haba* — are not of the type found in the Zohar, which are the nature of God, the emanation of worlds, the "forces" of evil, and more.

### ***Idra deVei Mashkana, Heikhalot, Raza deRazin, Saba deMishpatim, Tosefta, and Sitrei Torah***

In the Zohar there are more sections that are of different nature with regard to their contents and importance, as follows: *Idra deVei Mashkana* ("Assembly of the House of the Tabernacle") deals mainly with the secrets of prayer, and is found in the Zohar Vol. 2, *parashat Mishpatim* (pp. 122b-123b). *Heikhalot* ("Palaces") deals in describing the palaces of Gan Eden, and Gehinom, and contains many matters related to prayer. It is found in the Zohar Vol. 1, *parashat Bereishit* (pp 38a-45b); Vol. 2 *parashat Pekudei* (pp. 244b-262b, *heikhalot* of holiness; pp. 262b-268b, *heikhalot* of impurity). *Raza deRazin* ("Secret of Secrets") deals with revealing the essence of a man via the features of his face and hands. It is found in the Zohar Vol. 2, *parashat Yitro* (pp. 70a-75a). *Saba deMishpatim* ("The Elder on Statutes") is the commentary of Rav Yiba Saba regarding transmigration of souls, and punishments of the body in the grave. It is found in the Zohar Vol. 2, *parashat Mishpatim* (pp. 94a-114a). *Tosefta* are paragraphs containing the

beginnings of chapters on the wisdom of the Kabbalah of the Zohar, and it is dispersed in all three volumes of the Zohar. *Sitrei Torah* are drashas of verses from the Torah regarding matters of the soul and the secret of Divinity, and they are dispersed in the Zohar Vol. 1.

For more books and sources mentioned in the Zohar, see also below.

### **Zohar Chadash/The New Zohar (זוהר חדש)**

After the book of the Zohar was printed (in Mantua and in Cremona, in the Jewish years 5318-5320 or 1558-1560? CE), many more manuscripts were found which included paragraphs which pertained to the Zohar in their content and which had not been included in printed editions. The manuscripts pertained also to all parts of the Zohar; some were similar to Zohar on the Torah, some were similar to the inner parts of the Zohar (*Midrash haNe'elam*, *Sitrei Otiyot* and more), and some pertained to *Tikunei haZohar*. Some thirty years after the first edition of the Zohar was printed, the manuscripts were gathered and arranged according to the *parashas* of the Torah and the megillot (apparently the arrangement was done by the Kabbalist, Rabbi Avraham haLevi of Tsfat), and were printed first in Salonika in Jewish year 5357 (1587? CE), and then in Kraków (5363), and afterwards many times in various editions.

There is *Zohar Chadash* on the Torah for many *parashas* across the *chumash*, namely, on *chumash Bereishit: Bereishit, Noach, Lekh Lekha, Vayeira, Vayeishev*; on *chumash Shemot: Beshalach, Yitro, Terumah, Ki Tissa*; on *chumash Vayikra: Tzav, Acharei, Behar*; on *chumash Bamidbar: Chukat, Balak, Matot*; on *chumash Devarim: Va'etchanan, Ki Tetze, Ki Tavo*.

Within the paragraphs of *Zohar Chadash* are inserted *Sitrei Otiyot* ("Secrets of the Letters") and *Midrash haNe'elam*, on separate pages. Afterwards follows the *midrashim* -- *Midrash haNe'elam* on the megillot: *Shir haShirim, Ruth, and Eikhah*. And at the end are printed *Tikunim* (*Tikunei Zohar Chadash*, תיקוני זוהר חדש), like the *Tikunei haZohar*.

### **Tikunei haZohar/Rectifications of the Zohar (תיקוני הזוהר)**

Main article: *Tikunei haZohar*

*Tikunei haZohar*, which was printed as separate book, includes seventy commentaries called "*Tikunim*" (lit. Repairs) and an additional eleven *Tikkunim*. In some editions *Tikunim* are printed that were already printed in the *Zohar Chadash*, which in their content and style also pertain to *Tikunei haZohar*.

Each of the seventy *Tikunim* of *Tikunei haZohar* begins by explaining the word "*Bereishit*" (בראשית), and continues by explaining other verses, mainly in *parashat Bereishit*, and also from the rest of Tanakh. And all this is in the way of Sod, in commentaries that reveal the hidden and mystical aspects of the Torah.

*Tikunei haZohar* and *Ra'aya Meheimna* are similar in style, language, and concepts and different from the rest of the Zohar. For example, the idea of the Four Worlds is found in *Tikunei haZohar* and *Ra'aya Meheimna* but not elsewhere, as is true of the very use of the term "Kabbalah." In terminology, what is called Kabbalah in *Tikunei haZohar* and *Ra'aya Meheimna* is simply called *razin* (clues or hints) in the rest of the Zohar.<sup>[19]</sup> In *Tikunei haZohar* there are many references to "*chibura kadma'ah*" (meaning "the earlier book"). This refers to the main body of the Zohar.

### **Parts of the Zohar, Summary of Rabbinic View**

The traditional Rabbinic view is that most of the Zohar and the parts included in it (i.e. those parts mentioned above) were written and compiled by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, but some parts preceded Rashbi and he used them (such as *Sifra deTzni'uta*; see above), and some parts were written or arranged in generations after Rashbi's passing (for example, Tannaim after Rashbi's time are occasionally mentioned). However, aside from the parts of the Zohar mentioned above, in the Zohar are mentioned tens of earlier sources which Rashbi and his Chevraya Kadisha had,

and they were apparently the foundation of the Kabbalistic tradition of the Zohar. These include *Sefer Raziel*, *Sifra de'Agad'ta*, *Sifra de'Adam haRishon*, *Sifra de'Ashmedai*, *Sifra Chakhmeta Ila'ah diVnei Kedem*, *Sifra deChinukh*, *Sifra diShlomoh Malka*, *Sifra Kadma'i*, *Tzerufei de'Atvun de'Itmasru le'Adam beGan Eden*, and more. In the Jewish view this indicates more, that the teaching of the Sod in the book of the Zohar was not invented in the Tannaic period, but rather it is a tradition from ancient times which Rashbi and his Chevraya Kadisha used and upon which they built and founded their Kabbalah, and also that its roots are in the Torah that was given by Hashem to Moshe on Sinai.

## Viewpoint and Exegesis, Rabbinic View

According to the Zohar, the moral perfection of man influences the ideal world of the Sefirot; for although the Sefirot accept everything from the Ein Sof (Heb. אֵין סוֹף, infinity), the Tree of Life itself is dependent upon man: he alone can bring about the divine effusion. This concept is somewhat akin to the concept of Tikkun olam. The dew that vivifies the universe flows from the just. By the practice of virtue and by moral perfection, man may increase the outpouring of heavenly grace. Even physical life is subservient to virtue. This, says the Zohar, is indicated in the words "for the Lord God had not caused it to rain" (Gen. 2:5), which means that there had not yet been beneficent action in heaven, because man had not yet been created to pray for it.

The Zohar assumes four kinds of Biblical text exegesis, from the literal to the more mystical:

1. The simple, literal meaning of the text: *Peshat*
2. The allusion or hinted/allegorical meaning: *Remez*
3. The rabbinic comparison through sermon or illustration and metaphor: *Derash*
4. The secret/mysterious/hidden meaning: *Sod*

The initial letters of these words (P, R, D, S) form together the word *PaRDeS* ("paradise/orchard"), which became the designation for the Zohar's view of a fourfold meaning of the text, of which the mystical sense is considered the highest part.

## Viewpoint, Academic Views

In *Eros and Kabbalah*, Moshe Idel (Professor of Jewish Mysticism, Hebrew University in Jerusalem) argues that the fundamental distinction between the rational-philosophic strain of Judaism and mystical Judaism, as exemplified by the Zohar, is the mystical belief that the Godhead is complex, rather than simple, and that divinity is dynamic and incorporates gender, having both male and female dimensions. These polarities must be conjoined (have *yihud*, "union") to maintain the harmony of the cosmos. Idel characterizes this metaphysical point of view as "ditheism," holding that there are two aspects to God, and the process of union as "theoeroticism." This ditheism, the dynamics it entails, and its reverberations within creation is arguably the central interest of the Zohar, making up a huge proportion of its discourse (pp. 5–56).

Mention should also be made of the work of Elliot Wolfson (Professor of Jewish Mysticism, New York University), who has almost single-handedly challenged the conventional view, which is affirmed by Idel as well. Wolfson likewise recognizes the importance of heteroerotic symbolism in the kabbalistic understanding of the divine nature. The oneness of God is perceived in androgynous terms as the pairing of male and female, the former characterized as the capacity to overflow and the latter as the potential to receive. Where Wolfson breaks with Idel and other scholars of the kabbalah is in his insistence that the consequence of that heteroerotic union is the restoration of the female to the male. Just as, in the case of the original Adam, woman was constructed from man, and their carnal cleaving together was portrayed as becoming one flesh, so the ideal for kabbalists is the reconstitution of what Wolfson calls the male androgyne. Much closer in spirit to some ancient Gnostic dicta, Wolfson understands the eschatological ideal in traditional kabbalah to have been the female becoming male (see his *Circle in the Square* and *Language, Eros, Being*).



## Commentaries

The first known commentary on the book of Zohar, "Ketem Paz," was written by Rabbi Shimon Lavi of Libya.

Another important and influential commentary on Zohar, 22-volume "Or Yakar," was written by Rabbi Moshe Cordovero of the Tzfat (i.e. Safed) kabbalistic school in the 16th century.

The Vilna Gaon authored a commentary on the Zohar.

Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Ziditchov wrote a commentary on the Zohar entitled *Ateres Tzvi*.

A major commentary on the Zohar is the *Sulam* written by Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag.

A full translation of the Zohar into Hebrew was made by the late Rabbi Daniel Frish of Jerusalem under the title *Masok MiDvash*.

## Influence

### Judaism

On the one hand, the Zohar was lauded by many rabbis because it opposed religious formalism, stimulated one's imagination and emotions, and for many people helped reinvigorate the experience of prayer. In many places prayer had become a mere external religious exercise, while prayer was supposed to be a means of transcending earthly affairs and placing oneself in union with God.

According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, "On the other hand, the Zohar was censured by many rabbis because it propagated many superstitious beliefs, and produced a host of mystical dreamers, whose overexcited imaginations peopled the world with spirits, demons, and all kinds of good and bad influences." Many classical rabbis, especially Maimonides, viewed all such beliefs as a violation of Judaic principles of faith.

Its mystic mode of explaining some commandments was applied by its commentators to all religious observances, and produced a strong tendency to substitute mystic Judaism in the place of traditional rabbinic Judaism. For example, Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath, began to be looked upon as the embodiment of God in temporal life, and every ceremony performed on that day was considered to have an influence upon the superior world.

Elements of the Zohar crept into the liturgy of the 16th and 17th centuries, and the religious poets not only used the allegorism and symbolism of the Zohar in their compositions, but even adopted its style, e.g. the use of erotic terminology to illustrate the relations between man and God. Thus, in the language of some Jewish poets, the beloved one's curls indicate the mysteries of the Deity; sensuous pleasures, and especially intoxication, typify the highest degree of divine love as ecstatic contemplation; while the wine-room represents merely the state through which the human qualities merge or are exalted into those of God.

In the 17th century, it was proposed that only Jewish men who were at least 40 years old could study Kabbalah, and by extension read the Zohar, because it was believed to be too powerful for those less emotionally mature and experienced. Wikipedia:Citation needed

### Neo-Platonism

Founded in the 3rd century CE by Plotinus, The Neoplatonist tradition has clear echoes in the Zohar, as indeed in many forms of mystical spirituality, whether Jewish, Christian or Muslim. The concept of creation by successive emanations of God in particular is characteristic of neoplatonist thought. In both Kabbalistic and Neoplatonist systems, the Logos, or Divine Wisdom, is the primordial archetype of the universe, and mediates between the divine idea and the material world. Jewish commentators on the Zohar expressly noted these Greek influences.<sup>[20]</sup>

## Christian mysticism

According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, "The enthusiasm felt for the Zohar was shared by many Christian scholars, such as Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Johann Reuchlin, Aegidius of Viterbo, etc., all of whom believed that the book contained proofs of the truth of Christianity. They were led to this belief by the analogies existing between some of the teachings of the Zohar and certain Christian dogmas, such as the fall and redemption of man, and the dogma of the Trinity, which seems to be expressed in the Zohar in the following terms:

"The Ancient of Days has three heads. He reveals himself in three archetypes, all three forming but one. He is thus symbolized by the number Three. They are revealed in one another. [These are:] first, secret, hidden 'Wisdom'; above that the Holy Ancient One; and above Him the Unknowable One. None knows what He contains; He is above all conception. He is therefore called for man 'Non-Existing' [*Ayin*]" (Zohar, iii. 288b).

According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, "This and other similar doctrines found in the Zohar are now known to be much older than Christianity, but the Christian scholars who were led by the similarity of these teachings to certain Christian dogmas deemed it their duty to propagate the Zohar."

However, fundamental to the Zohar are descriptions of the absolute Unity and uniqueness of God, in the Jewish understanding of it, rather than a trinity or other plurality. One of the most common phrases in the Zohar is "*raza d'yichuda* "the secret of his Unity" which describes the Oneness of God as completely indivisible, even in spiritual terms. A central passage, *Patach Eliyahu* (introduction to Tikunei Zohar 17a), for example, says:

Elijah opened and said: "Master of the worlds! You are One, but not in number. You are He Who is Highest of the High, Most Hidden of the Hidden; no thought can grasp You at all...And there is no image or likeness of You, inside or out...And aside from You, there is no unity on High or Below. And You are acknowledged as the Cause of everything and the Master of everything...And You are the completion of them all. And as soon as You remove Yourself from them, all the Names remain like a body without a soul...All is to show how You conduct the world, but not that You have a known righteousness that is just, nor a known judgement that is merciful, nor any of these attributes at all...Blessed is God forever, amen and amen!

The meaning of the three heads of Keter, according to the kabbalists, has extremely different connotations from ascribing validity to any compound or plurality in God, even if the compound is viewed as unified. In Kabbalah, while God is an absolutely simple (non-compound), infinite Unity beyond grasp, as described in Jewish philosophy by Maimonides, through His Kabbalistic manifestations such as the Sephirot and the Shekhinah (Divine Presence), we relate to the living dynamic Divinity that emanates, enclothes, is revealed in, and incorporates, the multifarious spiritual and physical plurality of Creation within the Infinite Unity. Creation is plural, while God is Unity. Kabbalistic theology unites the two in the paradox of human versus Divine perspectives. The spiritual role of Judaism is to reach the level of perceiving the truth of the paradox, that all is One, spiritual and physical Creation being nullified into absolute Divine Monotheism. Ascribing any independent validity to the plural perspective is idolatry. Nonetheless, through the personalised aspects of God, revealing the concealed mystery from within the Divine Unity, man can perceive and relate to God, who otherwise would be unbridgably far, as the supernal Divine emanations are mirrored in the mystical Divine nature of man's soul.

The relationship between God's absolute Unity and Divine manifestations, may be compared to a man in a room - there is the man himself, and his presence and relationship to others in the room. In Hebrew, this is known as the Shekhinah. It is also the concept of God's Name - it is His relationship and presence in the world towards us. The Wisdom (literally written as Field of Apples) in kabbalistic terms refers to the Shekhinah, the Divine Presence. The Unknowable One (literally written as the Miniature Presence) refers to events on earth when events can be understood as natural happenings instead of God's act, although it is actually the act of God. This is known as perceiving the Shekhinah through a blurry, cloudy lens. This means to say, although we see God's Presence (not God Himself) through natural occurrences, it is only through a blurry lens; as opposed to miracles, in which we clearly

see and recognize God's presence in the world. The Holy Ancient **One** refers to God Himself, Who is imperceivable. (see Minchas Yaakov and anonymous commentary in the Siddur Beis Yaakov on the Sabbath hymn of Askinu Seudasa, composed by the Arizal based on this lofty concept of the Zohar).

Within the descending Four Worlds of Creation, each successive realm perceives Divinity less and apparent independence more. The highest realm *Atziluth-Emanation*, termed the "Realm of Unity," is distinguished from the lower three realms, termed the "Realm of Separation," by still having no self-awareness; absolute Divine Unity is revealed and Creation is nullified in its source. The lower three Worlds feel progressive degrees of independence from God. Where lower Creation can mistake the different Divine emanations as plural, Atziluth feels their non-existent unity in God. Within the constricted appearance of Creation, God is revealed through various and any plural numbers. God uses each number to represent a different supernal aspect of reality that He creates, to reflect their comprehensive inclusion in His absolute Oneness: 10 Sephirot, 12 Partzufim, 2 forms of Light, 2 Partzufim and 3 Heads in Keter, 4 letters of the Tetragrammaton, 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, 13 Attributes of Mercy, etc. All such forms when traced back to their source in God's infinite light, return to their state of absolute Oneness. This is the consciousness of Atziluth. In Kabbalah, this perception is considered subconsciously innate to the souls of Israel, rooted in Atzilut.<sup>[21]</sup> The souls of the Nations are elevated to this perception through adherence to the 7 Laws of Noah, that bring them to absolute Divine Unity and away from any false plural perspectives.

There is an alternative notion of three in the Zohar that are One, "Israel, the Torah and the Holy One Blessed Be He are One."<sup>[22]</sup> From the perspective of God, before constriction in Creation, these three are revealed in their source as a simple (non-compound) absolute Unity, as is all potential Creation from God's perspective. In Kabbalah, especially in Hasidism, the communal divinity of Israel is revealed Below in the righteous Tzadik Jewish leader of each generation who is a collective soul of the people. In the view of Kabbalah, however, no Jew would worship the supernal community souls of the Jewish people, or the Rabbinic leader of the generation, nor the totality of Creation's unity in God itself, as Judaism innately perceives the absolute Monotheism of God. In a Kabbalistic phrase, one prays "to Him, not to His attributes." As Kabbalah sees the Torah as the Divine blueprint of Creation, so any entity or idea in Creation receives its existence through an ultimate life force in Torah interpretation. However, in the descent of Creation, the Tzimtzum constrictions and impure Qliphoth side of false independence from God results in distortion of the original vitality source and idea. Accordingly, in the Kabbalistic view, the non-Jewish belief in the Trinity, as well as the beliefs of all religions, have parallel, supernal notions within Kabbalah from which they ultimately exist in the process of Creation. However, the impure distortion results from human ascription of false validity and worship to Divine manifestations, rather than realising their nullification to God's Unity alone.<sup>[23]</sup>

In normative Christian theology, as well as the declaration of the First Council of Nicaea, God is declared to be "one". Declarations such as "God is three" or "God is two" are condemned in later counsels as entirely heretical and idolatrous. The beginning of the essential declaration of belief for Christians, the Nicene Creed (somewhat equivalent to Maimonides' 13 principles of Faith), starts with the Shema influenced declaration that "We Believe in One God..." Like Judaism, Christianity asserts the absolute monotheism of God.

Unlike the Zohar, Christianity interprets the coming of the Messiah as the arrival of the true immanence of God. Like the Zohar the Messiah is believed to be the bringer of Divine Light: "The Light (the Messiah) shineth in the Darkness and the Darkness has never put it out," yet the Light, although being God, is separable within God since no one has seen God in flesh: "for no man has seen God..." (John 1). It is through the belief that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, since God had vindicated him by raising him from the dead, that Christians believe that Jesus is paradoxically and substantially God, despite God's simple undivided unity. The belief that Jesus Christ is "God from God, Light from Light" is assigned as a mystery and weakness of the human mind affecting and effecting our comprehension of him. The mystery of the Trinity and our mystical union with the Ancient of Days will only be made, like in the Zohar, in the new Garden of Eden which is made holy by the Light of God where people's love for God is unending.

## Zohar study (Jewish view)

### Who Should Study *Tikunei haZohar*

Despite the preeminence of *Tikunei haZohar* and despite the topmost priority of Torah study in Judaism, much of the Zohar has been relatively obscure and unread in the Jewish world in recent times, particularly outside of Israel and outside of Chasidic groups. Although some rabbis since the Shabbetai Tzvi debacle still maintain that one should be married and forty years old in order to study Kabbalah, since the time of Baal Shem Tov there has been relaxation of such stringency, and many maintain that it is sufficient to be married and knowledgeable in halakhah and hence permitted to study Kabbalah and by inclusion, *Tikunei haZohar*; and some rabbis will advise learning Kabbalah without restrictions of marriage or age.<sup>[24]</sup> In any case the aim of such caution is to not become caught up in Kabbalah to the extent of departing from reality or halakhah.

### Rabbinic Accolades; the Importance of Studying *Tikunei haZohar*

Many eminent rabbis and sages have echoed the Zohar's own urgings for Jews to study it, and have and urged people in the strongest of terms to be involved with it. To quote the from Zohar and from some of those rabbis:

"*Vehamaskilim yavinu*/But they that are wise will understand" (Dan. 12:10) -- from the side of Binah (understanding), which is the Tree of Life. Therefore it is said, "*Vehamaskilim yaz'hiru kezohar haraki à*"/And they that are wise will shine like the radiance of the sky" (Dan. 12:3) -- by means of this book of yours, which is the book of the Zohar, from the radiance (*Zohar*) of *Ima Ila'ah* (the "Higher Mother," the higher of the two primary partzufim which develop from Binah) [which is] *teshuvah*; with those [who study this work], trial is not needed. And because Yisrael will in the future taste from the Tree of Life, which is this book of the Zohar, they will go out, with it, from Exile, in a merciful manner, and with them will be fulfilled, "*Hashem badad yanchenu, ve'ein imo El nechar*/Hashem alone will lead them, and there is no strange god with Him" (Deut. 32:12).

—*Zohar, parashat Nasso, 124b, Ra àya Meheimna*

Woe to the [people of the] world who hide the heart and cover the eyes, not gazing into the secrets of the Torah!

—*Zohar Vol 1, p. 28a*

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov said the following praise of the Zohar's effect in motivating mitzvah performance, which is a main focus in Judaism:

It is [already] known that learning the Zohar is very, very mesugal [capable of bringing good effects]. Now know, that by learning the Zohar, desire is generated for all types of study of the holy Torah; and the holy wording of the Zohar greatly arouses [a person] towards service of Hashem Yitbarakh. Namely, the praise with which it praises and glorifies a person who serves Hashem, that is, the common expression of the Zohar in saying, "Zaka'ah/ Fortunate!" etc. regarding any mitzvah; and vice-versa, the cry that it shouts out, "Vai!" etc., "Vai leh, Vai lenishmateh/Woe to him, Woe to his soul!" regarding one who turns away from the service of Hashem -- these expressions greatly arouse the man for the service of the Blessed One.

— *Sichot Haran #108*

## English translations

- Zohar Pages in English, at [ha-zohar.net](http://ha-zohar.net), including the Introduction translated in English <sup>[25]</sup>
- Berg, Michael: Zohar 23 Volume Set- The Kabbalah Centre International. Full 23 Volumes English translation with commentary and annotations.
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- [1] <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Template:Kabbalah&action=edit>
- [2] Scholem, Gershom and Melila Hellner-Eshed. "Zohar." *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. Vol. 21. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007. 647–664. Gale Virtual Reference Library. Gale.
- [3] Beyer 1986: 38–43; Casey 1998: 83–6, 88, 89–93; Eerdmans 1975: 72.
- [4] e.g. Siddur Sim Shalom edited by Jules Harlow
- [5] "The purpose of this work [the Holy Zohar] was to bring the remedy before the disease, to help Yisrael in the Exile through the unifications and the things that are accomplished through them [i.e. the unifications] in order to increase the strength of holiness, and so that the generation would learn the secrets of the Torah... and so that they would know how to awaken [Divine] mercy and be saved from evil decrees." -- *Sefer Or Yakar, Shaar Alef, Siman Hei*
- [6] "For, the segulah [special charm and efficacy] of this book [Tikunei haZohar] is to bring the Redemption and freedom from the Exile. And although all the books of Rashbi draw the Redeemer closer... behold, the book of Tikkunim does so especially, because for this purpose he compiled it..." -- The beginning of the introduction of the commentary *Kisse Melekh* by Rabbi Shalom Buzaglo on Tikunei haZohar
- [7] "And because Yisrael will in the future taste from the Tree of Life, which is this book of the Zohar, they will go out, with it, from Exile, in a merciful manner." -- Zohar, Vol. 3, 124b, *Ra'aya Meheimna*; et al.
- [8] "... the children [of Yisrael] below will shout out in unison and say, "Shem`a Yisrael/Hear O Yisrael!" but there will be no voice and no reply... so is whoever causes the Kabbalah and the Wisdom to be removed from the Oral Torah and from the Written Torah, and causes people to not endeavor in them, and says that there is nothing other than the pshat in the Torah and the Talmud. Certainly it is as if he removes the flow from that River and from that Garden. Woe to him! Better for him that he were not created in the world and did not learn that Written Torah and Oral Torah! For it is considered of him as if he returned the world to *tohu vavohu* (unformed and void) and he causes poverty in the world and prolongs the Exile." —Tikunei haZohar #43, p. 82a; et. al.
- [9] *Bechinat ha-Dat* ed. Vienna, 1833, p. 43, in the Jacobs and Broyde, "The Zohar," *Jewish Encyclopedia*
- [10] See Rabbi Menachem Schneerson (the Tzemach Tzedek), Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 33, p. 98, where the author, quoting a response Reb Hillel Paritcher related from Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (the Baal HaTanya) (quoted also in the beginning of Shar Kakelel) explains that where there is an argument between Kabbalah and Poskim (legal scholars), the *former* should be followed. For it is impossible to say that the Kabbalah is in contradiction with the Talmud itself. Rather, the Kabbalists and the legal scholars have variant understanding of the explanation of the Talmud. See also Rabbi David ben Solomon ibn Zimra (the Radvaz) (Chelek 4, Siman 1,111) and Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch ben Yaakov Ashkenazi (the Chacham Tzvi) (Siman 36) (cited in Shaarei Teshuva 25:14). See also the Responsa of Menachem Schneerson (*Responsa Tzemach Tzedek A.H. Siman 18,4*) and Divrei Nechemia (*Responsa Divrei Nechemia O.H. 21*). It should be noted however that the views of the Radvaz and of the Chacham Tzvi are that one should follow the opinion of the Zohar only where a conclusive statement has not been made by the legal authorities (Gemara or Poskim), or when an argument is found between the Poskim. The above quoted view, attributed to the Baal HaTanya, would thus be accepted as authoritative by followers of the Baal HaTanya, followers of the Ben Ish Chai, and followers of other Halacha codifiers who accept to follow the rulings of Kabala over those of the Poskim. Such include: some Chassidim, select Sefardim, and other well known groups.
- [11] <http://www.chayas.com/milhamoth.htm>
- [12] Dan, Joseph *Kabbalah: a Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p 22
- [13] Much of the information on contents and sections of the Zohar is found in the book *Ohr haZohar* (אור הזוהר) by Rabbi Yehuda Shalom Gross, in Hebrew, published by Mifal Zohar Hoilumi, Ramat Beth Shemesh, Israel, Heb. year 5761 (2001 CE); also available at [http://israel613.com/HA-ZOHAR/OR\\_HAZOHAR\\_2.htm](http://israel613.com/HA-ZOHAR/OR_HAZOHAR_2.htm), accessed Mar. 1, 2012; explicit permission is given in both the printed and electronic book "to whoever desires to print paragraphs from this book, or the entire book, in any language, in any country, in order to increase Torah

and fear of Heaven in the world and to awaken hearts our brothers the children of Yisrael in complete *teshuvah*."

[14] *Hadrat Melekh* on *Sifra diTzni uto*, at the end of paragraph 1

[15] זהר ח', בסיום פירושו לספר"צ

[16] Zohar Vol. 3, Idra Rabba, p. 144a

[17] *Ohr haChamah laZohar*, part 2, p. 115b, in the name of the Ramak

[18] the Ramaz, brought in *Mikdash Melekh laZohar, parashat Vayeira*, Zalkova edition, p. 100

[19] According to Rabbi Yaakov Siegel, in an email dated Feb. 29, 2012, to ~Nissimnanch

[20] For example, the *Porta Coelorum* of Rabbi Abraham Cohen Irija, which forms the third part of Rosenroth's *Apparatus in Librum Sohar*, was written expressly to exhibit the correspondences between Kabbalistic dogmas and the Platonic philosophy. (See A.E. Waite, *The Holy Kabbalah: a study of the secret tradition in Israel*, London 1924, reprinted 1996), p.71ff.

[21] True Monotheism: Jewish Consciousness from the World of Atzilut (<http://www.inner.org/monothei/mono2.htm>) from inner.org

[22] True Monotheism: The Jewish Three that are One (<http://www.inner.org/monothei/mono3.htm>) from inner.org

[23] *Mystical Concepts in Chassidism: An introduction to kabbalistic concepts and doctrines*, Jacob Immanuel Schochet, Kehot publications.

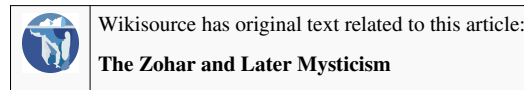
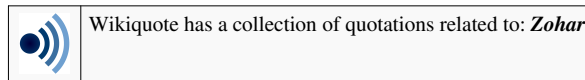
Chapter on *Shevirat HaKeilim* etc. describes the Qliphoth side of impurity deriving from the Lurianic shattered vessels of Tohu which acted independently of each other. The fallen vessels are nurtured externally by remnants of their light. The realm of evil is characterised by falsely feeling independent, through being unaware of its true Divine source of vitality on which it depends (external nurture)

[24] For example, Rabbi Aryeh Rosenfeld z"l instructed Rabbi Yaakov (Jeffrey) Siegel to learn Zohar while he was still single. (Correspondence with ~Nissimnanch)

[25] [http://ha-zohar.net/ZOHAR\\_ENGLISH.htm](http://ha-zohar.net/ZOHAR_ENGLISH.htm)

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- *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Myth, Magic, and Mysticism*, Geoffrey Dennis, Llewellyn Worldwide, 2007
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## External links



- Zohar Pages in English, at ha-zohar.net, including the Introduction translated in English, and *The Importance of Study of the Zohar*, and more ([http://ha-zohar.net/ZOHAR\\_ENGLISH.htm](http://ha-zohar.net/ZOHAR_ENGLISH.htm))
- *Sefer haZohar and Tikunei haZohar* in various formats in PDF files; and related booklets ([http://ha-zohar.net/ZOHAR\\_SEFORIM.htm](http://ha-zohar.net/ZOHAR_SEFORIM.htm))
- *Sefer haZohar*, Mantua edition (1558), at the National Library of Israel, DjVu file (<http://aleph.nli.org.il/nnl/dig/books/bk001073457.html>)
- *Sefer haZohar*, [[Cremona (<http://aleph.nli.org.il/nnl/dig/books/bk001103391.html>)] edition (1559), at the National Library of Israel, DjVu file]
- The Zohar in text files for download (Hebrew characters) (<https://sites.google.com/site/magartoratemet/zohar>)
- The Zohar in English: Bereshith to Lekh Lekha (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/zdm/index.htm>)
- The Zohar in English: some mystical sections (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/tku/index.htm>)
- The Kabbalah Center translation of the Zohar (<http://www.zohar.com>)
- Original Zohar with Sulam Commentary (<http://www.kabbalah.info/engkab/the-zohar/download-the-zohar>)
- NOTES ON THE ZOHAR IN ENGLISH: An Extensive Bibliography (<http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Biblios/zie.pdf>)
- 7 brief video lectures about The Zohar from Kabbalah Education & Research Institute (<http://enterthezohar.com>)
- Daily Zohar study of Tikunei Zohar in English (<http://www.dailyzohar.com/>)
- Zohar Complete English Translation (<https://archive.org/details/ZoharCompleteEnglishTranslation>)
- The Aramaic Language of the Zohar (<http://aramaiczohar.wordpress.com/>)

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## Brown-Driver-Briggs

I. **verb be light, shining** (Arabic **زَهَرَ**, **زَهَر** *shine*, adjective **أَزْهَرُ** *bright*)  
(compare Lag<sup>BN 120</sup>); Aramaic **זָהַר**, **זָהַל**; Late Hebrew in derivatives; see also below II. **זָהַר** —

**Hiph'il intrans.** (late) *send out light, shine*, figurative of everlasting glory of teachers of righteousness: **וְהַמְשִׁכְלִים יִזְהְרוּ כְּזֹהַר הַרְקִיעַ** **Daniel 12:3** *and they that make wise shall shine like the shining of the firmament* (**וּמַצְדִּיקֵי הָרַבִּים בְּכוֹכְבִּים לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד**).

<http://biblehub.com/hebrew/2094.htm> (as the previous two references to this source)

**Zohariel YHVH** - one of the [secret names of God](#) and one of the highest-ranking princes of the Divine Presence. He is also a cabalistic angel who is "one of the principal objects of the [Merkabah](#) vision," associated with the Holy Shekinah.

<http://hafapea.com/angelpages/angels7.html>