

# THE ZOHAR



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Rav Michael Laitman, PhD

# THE ZOHAR

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## PROLOGUE

### ABOUT RABBI SHIMON BAR-YOCHAI<sup>1</sup>

In the second century CE, a single man was granted the spiritual knowledge that Kabbalists had accumulated for 3,000 years before his time. Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai (Rashbi) put it all on paper and then hid it, as humanity was not ready for it. Today, we are ready for the revelation of *The Book of Zohar*.



Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai (Rashbi), author of *The Book of Zohar* (*The Book of Radiance*) was a Tana—a great sage in the early Common Era centuries. Rashbi’s name is tied to numerous legends, and he is mentioned constantly in the Talmud and in the Midrash, the sacred Hebrew texts of his time. He lived in Sidon and in Meron, and established a seminary in the Western Galilee.

Rashbi was born and raised in the Galilee (a mountainous region in today’s Northern Israel). Even as a child, he was not like other children his age. Questions such as, “What is the purpose of my life?” “Who am I?” and “How is the world built?” plagued him and demanded answers.

In those days, life in Galilee was very harsh: the Romans persecuted Jews and continually invented new laws to make their lives more difficult. Among these laws was a decree that prohibited Jews from studying the Torah (then synonymous with Kabbalah).

<sup>1</sup> The articles, “About Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai” and “About The Book of Zohar” are presented here courtesy of the paper *Kabbalah Today*.

However, despite the Romans' prohibition, Rashbi immersed himself in the Kabbalah and tried to understand its subtle teachings. He felt that beneath the Biblical stories was a profound and hidden truth, which held the answers to his persistent questions.

Gradually, Rabbi Shimon came to realize that he had to find a teacher who had already been through the spiritual path, gained experience, and could guide others up the spiritual ladder. He decided to join the group of the greatest Kabbalist of the time—Rabbi Akiva—a decision that turned out to be the turning point in Rashbi's life.

### STUDYING WITH RABBI AKIVA

Rabbi Shimon was an avid, devoted student, burning with desire to discover the Higher realms of reality. Before long, he was one of Rabbi Akiva's prime students. He studied with Rabbi Akiva for thirteen years, and achieved the highest levels on the spiritual ladder.

The Bar-Kokheva revolt abruptly ended the great days of Rabbi Akiva's seminary. Almost all of his 24,000 students died in plagues, and in fierce battles against the Romans. Of the 24,000 students, only five survived, and Rashbi was among them.

Rashbi was among the leaders of the Bar-Kokheva revolt against the Roman rule in the land of Israel. His resistance became even more fierce and unyielding when he'd learned how his teacher, Rabbi Akiva, had been ruthlessly executed.

The Talmud writes that once, when Rashbi spoke against the Roman rule, a fellow Jew heard him and alerted the Roman authorities. In consequence, Rashbi was tried in absentia and was sentenced to death. The Roman emperor sent men in search of him, but to their disappointment, Rashbi seemed to have vanished into thin air.

### THE CAVE AT PEQI'IN

Legends have it that Rashbi and his son fled to the Galilee, hid in a cave at Peqi'in, a village in the north of Israel, and remained there for thirteen years. During that time, they delved in the secrets of the wisdom of the hidden. Their efforts succeeded, and they discovered the entire system of creation.

After thirteen years in a cave, Rashbi heard that the Roman emperor had died. He could finally heave a sigh of relief. After leaving the cave, Rashbi gathered nine students and went with them to a small cave in Meron, known as

The Idra Raba (Great Assembly). With their help, he wrote *The Book of Zohar*, the most important book of Kabbalah.

Baal HaSulam described Rashbi and his students as the only beings who achieved perfection, the 125 spiritual degrees that complete the correction of one's soul. When he finished his commentary on *The Book of Zohar*, Baal HaSulam held a festive meal to celebrate its completion. At that celebration, he stated that "...prior to the days of the Messiah, it is impossible to be awarded all 125 degrees... except the Rashbi and his contemporaries, meaning the authors of *The Book of Zohar*. They were awarded all 125 degrees in completeness, even though they lived prior to the days of the Messiah. Hence, we often find in *The Zohar* that there will not be a generation such as the Rashbi's until the generation of the Messiah King. This is why his composition made such a strong impression in the world, since the secrets of the Torah in it occupy the level of all 125 degrees. This is also why it is said in *The Zohar* that *The Book of Zohar* will not be revealed except at the end of days, meaning in the days of the Messiah."

#### **THE IDRA RABA (GREAT ASSEMBLY) AND THE BOOK OF ZOHAR**

Idra Raba is a cave located in the north of Israel, between Meron and Zephath. Rashbi took his students to this cave, and there he wrote *The Book of Zohar*. It is almost impossible to understand how great Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai really was. He belongs, as Baal HaSulam puts it, to the highest Inner Light. This is why he had to use Rabbi Abba to put his words into writing. In *The Book of Zohar*, the Rashbi tells his students: "I am arranging you as follows: Rabbi Abba will write, Rabbi Elazar, my son, will study orally, and the rest of the friends will converse in their hearts" (*Zohar*, Haazinu).

*The Book of Zohar* was written in the second century CE, not long after the ruin of the Second Temple and the beginning of the last exile of the people of Israel from its land. But even prior to the exile, Rashbi predicted that *The Book of Zohar* would only be revealed at the end of the exile. He stated that its appearance to the masses would symbolize the end of the spiritual exile: "...in it, they will come out of the exile with mercy" (*Zohar*, Naso).

It is also written in *The Book of Zohar* that its wisdom would be revealed to all toward the end of the six thousand years, the period allotted to the correction of humanity: "And when it is near the days of the Messiah, even infants in the world are destined to find the secrets of the wisdom, and know in them the ends and the calculations of redemption, and at that time it will be revealed to all" (*Zohar*, VaYera).

## THE REINCARNATION OF A UNIQUE SOUL

Rashbi is an incarnation of a unique soul, which coordinates and connects the Upper Force to every creation. This soul comes down into our world and incarnates in the patriarchs of Kabbalah. This is the order of its appearance: Abraham, Moses, Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai, the ARI (Rabbi Isaac Luria), and Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam). Each incarnation of this soul promotes humanity to a new spiritual degree and leaves its mark in Kabbalah books, which serve the generations that follow.

An example of this process can be found in special sections of *The Zohar* called *Raia Meheimna* (The Loyal Shepherd). In these parts, Rashbi speaks from a state of clothing in Moses' soul. Another example of this is the book, *Shaar HaGilgulim* (*Gate of Reincarnations*), where Rashbi speaks from a state of clothing in the soul of the ARI.

*The Book of Zohar* is undoubtedly unique and one of the world's most renowned compositions. Since its writing, thousands of stories have been linked to *The Zohar*, and the book is still shrouded in mystery today. The fascination around it is so great that even though the book is completely incomprehensible to our generation without proper interpretation, millions of people diligently read it.

## RASHBI'S DEPARTURE

According to tradition, Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai passed away in the presence of his friends on *Lag BaOmer* (the 33<sup>rd</sup> day of the *Omer* count, which starts on the first day of Passover) of the year 160 CE, and was buried in Meron. With his death, the soul of a giant Kabbalist completed its task in our world.

Rashbi fulfilled his destination. Hundreds of thousands visit his gravesite yearly, trying to sense some of the Light that he had brought to the world. The greatest Kabbalists praise his composition and repeatedly claim that *The Book of Zohar* is destined to bring redemption to the world.

Rav Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of Israel, writes about the *Zohar* (*Ohr Yakar*): "This composition, called *The Book of Zohar*, is like Noah's Ark, where there were many kinds, but those kinds and families could not exist unless by entering the ark. ...**Thus the righteous will enter the secret of the Light of this composition to persist, and thus is the virtue of the composition, that immediately when engaging, with his desire for the love of God, it will draw him as a magnet draws the iron. And he will enter it to save his**

**soul and spirit and his correction. And even if he is wicked, there is no fear should he enter.”**

We are living in a historic time. The soul of Rashbi is completing its mission in our generation, and thanks to this spiritual giant, who lived nearly 2,000 years ago, the wisdom of Kabbalah is emerging so we may all ascend to a life of eternity and wholeness.

## ABOUT THE BOOK OF ZOHAR

***The Book of Zohar* is the most mysterious, and at the same time the most significant book of Kabbalah. In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that although *The Book of Zohar* was written eighteen centuries ago, it was actually written for our time. Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam) opened it to us and rekindled what has long been forgotten from our hearts.**

*The depth of the wisdom in The Book of Zohar is locked behind a thousand doors.*

–Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam), “Preface to the Book of Zohar”

Since the dawn of humanity, unique individuals climbed the spiritual ladder and achieved the highest level of bonding with the Upper Force, the Creator. We call those people “Kabbalists.”

Through this bonding, they came to understand that the whole of reality, from the highest spiritual worlds down to our world, is founded on love and bestowal. They realized that there is nothing in the world except for this Force, and that everything that happens in reality was made only to bring humanity to permanent existence with this sensation.

Kabbalists have searched and found the answers to every question they asked—the purpose of our lives, the structure of the world, and how we can determine our destiny. They wrote about what they discovered in books such as *Raziel Hamalaach (The Angel Raziel)*, *Sefer Yetzira (The Book of Creation)*, *Etz Chaim (The Tree of Life)*, and others.

Of all the books, the most seminal, mysterious, and profound is *The Book of Zohar (The Book of Radiance)*. *The Book of Zohar* describes the hidden system of the Upper Guidance. It depicts the worlds, the great powers that govern them, and how one who chooses to study Kabbalah affects his or her own fate and that of humanity.

*The Zohar* also explains how every event cascades from the Upper World to ours, and the dressings it acquires here. But what makes *The Zohar* unique is the fact that it was not written for its contemporaries; it was rather intended for a generation that would live two millennia later—our generation.

## REMOVING THE COVERS

*Our generation stands at the very threshold of redemption, if we only know how to spread the wisdom of the hidden in the masses.*

—Baal HaSulam, “Messiah’s Horn”

The twentieth century has brought unprecedented changes. These opened the door to a whole new phase, which the greatest Kabbalists have been describing for centuries in their writings. The greatest change of all is that in this century, Kabbalists state that studying Kabbalah is not only permitted, it is a must!

It is written in *The Book of Zohar* itself that the wisdom of Kabbalah would begin its spreading from the year 1840. The great 18<sup>th</sup> century Kabbalist, The Vilna Gaon (GRA), wrote in his book *Kol HaTor (Voice of the Turtledove)* that the process of the revelation of the Kabbalah would begin in 1990. In his book, *Even Shlemah (A Perfect and Just Weight)*, Chapter 11, he even stated that redemption depends primarily on the study of Kabbalah.

Rav Kook explained that “the great spiritual questions that were once resolved only for the great and the excellent, must now be resolved to various degrees within the entire nation” (*Eder HaYaker ve Ikvey HaTzon*, p. 144).

But it was Baal HaSulam who turned the words of the Kabbalists from a vision to a tangible reality. He clearly saw that the time had come to allow everyone to study *The Book of Zohar*. He claimed that by studying *The Zohar*, the whole of humanity would rise and attain the spiritual world.

With this vision in mind, Baal HaSulam devoted himself to composing a comprehensive, accurate, and systematic interpretation of *The Book of Zohar*. His goal was to unveil the book to the public and make it suitable for the souls of our generation.

In the introduction to his commentary on *The Zohar*, he explained why he wrote it: “I have named the commentary *HaSulam* (The Ladder) to indicate that the function of my commentary is as the function of any ladder. If you have an attic filled with abundance, you need only a ladder to climb it, and all the bounty in the world will be in your hands.”

## ACCELERATING THE SPREAD OF THE WISDOM

All the Kabbalists dreamed of our generation, when the whole of humanity could discover the wondrous things they already had. They prayed that through reading the authentic sources they had left for us, we, too, would achieve bonding with the Upper Force, as did they. In his commentary on *The Book of Zohar*, Baal HaSulam threw us a rope, “a life buoy.” In doing so, he paved our way to a future of abundance and prosperity.

Baal HaSulam called upon us to give greater weight to engagement in the wisdom of Kabbalah, and accelerate the spreading of the wisdom. He knew that only the wisdom of Kabbalah could elevate the world to the spiritual realm and into the eternity that Kabbalists had been experiencing throughout the generations.

Webster’s Dictionary defines a generation as “a group of individuals born and living contemporaneously (at the same time).” In Kabbalah, however, a generation is a *spiritual* phase. According to great Kabbalists such as the Holy ARI, our generation—our spiritual phase—began in the sixteenth century.

The longer we wait with the spiritual ascension our generation is meant to achieve, the greater will be our discomfort. The spiritual realm, which determines what happens in our world, will increase its pressure on us until we decide to achieve this realm for ourselves.

In the words of the great Kabbalist Rabbi Avraham Azulai (in his introduction to the book, *Ohr ha Chama (Light of the Sun)*), “I have found it written that the above decree to not openly engage in the wisdom of truth was only for a time—until the end of the 1490. From then on ... the sentence has been lifted, and permission was given to engage in *The Book of Zohar*. And from the year 1540 it has become praiseworthy to engage in great numbers since it is by virtue of this the Messiah King will come, and not by another virtue. It is inappropriate to be negligent.”

“But the wise shall understand that their elevation comes from the Creator, the Tree of Life. And they who are righteous shall shine like the brightness of the firmament” (Daniel, 12:3).<sup>2</sup>

“By virtue of Rabbi Shimon’s composition, *The Book of Zohar*, from the Supernal Force that brings all things back to the Creator, at the end of days, the children of Israel will taste from the Tree of Life, which is *The Book of Zohar*; and they will be redeemed from exile by the Creator’s mercy” (Naso, 90).

<sup>2</sup> To facilitate comprehension of the spiritual meaning of ancient Hebrew sources, quotes are not direct translations, but rather reflect the Kabbalistic meaning of the texts.



## INTRODUCTION

*The Book of Zohar* narrates that Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai (Rashbi) and his son, Rabbi Aba, attained the level of Prophet Eliyahu (Elijah). Hence, it is said that Eliyahu himself visited their cave and taught them the Torah. (Incidentally, the cave in the village of Peqi'in still exists today.)

The author of *Divrey Yoel (The Words of Yoel)* wrote the following in the book *The Torah of Rashbi*: “Before Rabbi Shimon studied the secrets of the Torah, there was a rule in the cave—to settle disputes according to the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, the author of the Talmud. However, after Rabbi Shimon left the cave, everything that he had written in *The Zohar* was considered to have exceeded all human attainments.” Rashbi himself received the name *Butzina Kadisha* (Holy Candle), as he had attained the soul of Moshe (Moses).

Verdicts on legislative and procedural matters are rendered in accordance with the Talmud or *The Book of Zohar*, depending on where this matter is examined more strictly. If the matter is mentioned neither in the Talmud nor in *The Zohar*, then the decision is based on the source that best elucidates this matter. If the disputed matter is between the Talmud and the legislators, the decision is based on the assertion from *The Book of Zohar*. If the legislators themselves cannot come to an agreement on the matter in dispute, the decision is based on the opinion of *The Zohar (Mishna Brura, 25, 42)*.

The great follower of Rashbi, an heir (next receiver) to his soul, Rabbi Isaac Luria (The Holy ARI) wrote that his soul was a return of the soul of Rabbi Shimon, and the soul of Rabbi Shimon was a return of the soul of Moshe (*Shaar HaGilgulim*, item 64). He also wrote that the soul of Moshe clothed in Rashbi to correct the soul of *Achiya HaShiloni* (Ahijah the Shilonite), who “corrupted” *Malchut* on account of the sin of King Yerav'am (Jeroboam), which prompted the transgression of all Israel. Hence, the soul of Rashbi appeared

to correct Israel's sins. The part of *The Zohar* titled *Raya Meheimna* (Loyal Shepherd) relates how Rashbi attained the soul of Moshe, merged with it, and attained the supernal wisdom.

In his works *Maranan ve Rabanan* and *Kli Yakar* (*Melachim*, 2, 12), the great HaChida also says that Rashbi's entire work lay in correction of the sin of *Achiya HaShiloni*.

As Rashbi says in the Talmud (*Sukkah*, 45, 2): "I can redeem the entire world from judgment from the day of my birth to the present day. And if my son is with me, from the day the world was created to the present day. And if Yotam Ben Uziyahu is with us, from the day the world was created to its end." The book of *Melachim* narrates about Yotam Ben Uziyahu (20, 15).

After the verdict was lifted, Rashbi founded his seminary in the settlement of Tekoa and in the village of Meron. There he taught his disciples Kabbalah and wrote *The Book of Zohar*, thereby revealing what was forbidden to reveal from the time of Israel's reception of the Torah (*Tikuney Zohar, Hakdamah*, p. 17).

However, to write down all the secrets of the Torah, Rabbi Shimon had to express them in a secret form. Rashbi's disciple, Rabbi Aba, had a unique quality to his soul. This quality enabled him to convey spiritual knowledge in a secret, concealed form. Hence, Rabbi Shimon asked his disciple to express his thoughts for him, that is, to commit Rashbi's thoughts to paper. The ARI explained it in the following way: "*The Book of Zohar* must remain concealed until the generation of the coming of the *Mashiach* (Messiah), as through the study of this book will humankind return from its spiritual exile" (The ARI, *Shaar HaHakdamot, Hakdamah*, p. 3). That is why Rabbi Aba wrote the teachings of Rabbi Shimon in Aramaic, as it is the reverse side of Hebrew.

The ARI wrote (*Maamarey Rashbi (Articles of Rashbi)*, p. 100) that the writing of *The Zohar* in a secret form was possible because the soul of Rabbi Aba originated from the Surrounding Light, and not from the Inner Light. For this reason, the ARI explained, he could express the most supernal wisdom in a secret form as simple stories.

(Rabbi Shimon lived approximately to the age of eighty and passed away on the holiday of *Lag BaOmer*, the eighteenth day in the month *Iyar*, surrounded by his disciples, and recognized by the entire nation. This day is celebrated as the holiday of Light. Rabbi Shimon's body was buried in a cave off Mount Meron, and the body of his son, Rabbi Elazar, is buried a few meters from him.)

Like the subsequent compositions of the ARI and other Kabbalists (evidently, such is the lot of all true spiritual books), *The Book of Zohar* was concealed for

some 1,100 years in a cave near Meron, since the day it was written, until an Arab man found it and sold it in the market as wrapping cloth.

Part of the torn sheets fell into the hands of a sage, who recognized and appreciated the value of the writings. After a long search, he recovered many sheets from refuse bins or bought them from spice vendors, who were selling their merchandise wrapped in the sheets of *The Zohar*. It was out of these recovered sheets that the book (as we know it today) was compiled.

For many centuries, since that time until today, *The Book of Zohar* has been the subject of controversy. Philosophers, scientists, and other “sages,” still debate it today. Yet, the fact remains that only a Kabbalist, one who ascends to a particular spiritual degree, attains what this book conveys. To all other people, it seems like a collection of narratives, stories, and ancient philosophy. Only those who do not comprehend this book argue over it; but Kabbalists know for certain that Rashbi’s book is the greatest source of spiritual attainment that the Creator imparted upon the people in this world.

Although *The Book of Zohar* was written in the second century, only Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag was able to provide a full commentary on it in the 1930s-40s. The reason for the concealment of *The Zohar* from the second century to thirteenth century and the lack of a complete commentary on it for eighteen centuries is explained in the “Introduction to the Book of Zohar.”

Rabbi Ashlag called his commentary *HaSulam* (The Ladder) because by studying it, one can ascend the spiritual degrees of attainment of the Upper Worlds as one would climb a ladder in our world. Following the publishing of the *Sulam* commentary, Rabbi Ashlag received the epithet *Baal HaSulam* (Owner of the Ladder), as it is customary among sages of the Torah to call a person not by his name, but according to his highest attainment.

### **THE BOOK OF ZOHAR CONTAINS:**

1. **Hakdamat Sefer HaZohar** (*The Introduction of the Book of Zohar*)—containing several articles that fully reveal the inner meaning of the Torah.
2. **Sefer HaZohar** (*The Book of Zohar*)—divided into parts and chapters that correspond to the weekly portions of the Torah:

**The Book of Beresheet** (*Genesis*): *Beresheet, Noach, Lech Lecha, Vayera, Chaiey Sarah, Toldot, Vayetze, Vayishlach, Vayeshev, Miketz, Vayigash, Vayichi.*

**The Book of Shemot** (*Exodus*): *Shemot, Vayera, Bo, Beshalach, Yitro, Mishpatim, Terumah (Safra de Tzniuta), Tetzaveh, Ki Tissa, Veyikahel, Pekudey.*

**The Book of *Vayikra* (Leviticus):** *Vayikra, Tzav, Shmini, Tazria, Metzura, Acharey, Kedushim, Emor, BaHar, Vechukotay.*

**The Book of *Bamidbar* (Numbers):** *Bamidbar, Naso (Idra Raba), Baalotcha, Shlach Lecha, Korach, Chukat, Balak, Pinchas, Matot.*

**The Book of *Devarim* (Deuteronomy):** *VeEtchanen, Ekev, Shoftim, Titze, Vayelech, Haazinu (Idra Zuta).*

**3. *Zohar Hadash* (The New Zohar):** additions to the weekly chapters:

*Beresheet, Noach, Lech Lecha, Vayera, Vayetze, Vayeshev, Bashalach, Yitro, Terumah, Ki Titze, Tzav, Acharey, BaHar, Naso, Chukat, Balak, Matot, VeEtchanen, Ki Titze, Ki Tavo.*

**4. Additional books in *The Book of Zohar*** that are not a direct commentary on the Torah:

*Idra Raba, Idra Zuta, Safra de Tzniuta, Raza de Razin, Tosefta, Raya Mi'emna, Ashmatot, Sitrey Torah, Sitrey Otiot, and Tikuney Zohar.*

**5. *Midrash HaNe'elam* (The Commentary on the Writings):** *Song of Songs, Ruth, Eicha (Lamentations)*—and on the Torah (Pentateuch).

Baal HaSulam wrote the commentary on the portions of *The Zohar* that are known to us. His main commentaries in the “Introduction to the Book of Zohar” and the chapter “Beresheet” are expressed in terms of man’s spiritual work. The most valuable articles of *The Zohar* for the science of Kabbalah are *Idra Raba, Idra Zuta, and Safra de Tzniuta*. All of them are expressed in the language of Kabbalah. Besides these articles, the rest of *The Zohar* is written in the language of Midrash.

In its original form, *The Book of Zohar*—written by Rabbi Aba sixteen centuries ago—was not divided into weekly chapters. Its volume was several times larger than the text that reached us; it expounded not only the Torah, but also twenty-four other books of the Bible (Pentateuch, Prophets, and Writings).

Besides *The Book of Zohar* itself, Rabbi Shimon’s book of *Tikkunim* (corrections) had reached us, as well. It comprises seventy commentaries on the first word of the Torah, *Beresheet* (in the beginning), since it includes everything.

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

At the beginning of the text, the semantic translation is given in bold script. *The Sulam* commentary and my explanations are in regular script or *italics* because it turned out to be extremely difficult to separate my explanations from Rabbi Ashlag's holy texts. The numbers at the beginning of the items correspond to the numbers of the items in *The Book of Zohar* with *The Sulam* commentary, vol. 1.

The reason for the interlacing of texts is the need to explain the meaning of *The Zohar* in several languages simultaneously: a) the language of Kabbalah (*Sefirot*, *Partzufim*, *Gematria*, and worlds), b) the language of spiritual work (emotions), c) the language of the Torah (narrative), and d) the language of the Talmud (judicial).

To comprehend the style of *The Book of Zohar*, I recommend the reader to return to the translation of the original text after reading and mastering the commentary.

*The Book of Zohar*, like the whole of the Torah, speaks exclusively of man (creation) and his relationship with the Creator. The Torah attaches worldly appellations to all of man's inner properties. Thus, the aspiration to the Creator is called "Israel," and the aspiration to selfish reception of pleasures is called "nations of the world." However, there is no connection whatsoever between these names in the Torah and the Jews and other nations in our world. Kabbalah appeals to *man*, to creation!

The book contains articles commented upon in the language of Kabbalah, and others commented upon in the language of emotions, which is easier to understand for the beginner. The reader can begin the study of the book with such articles as "Night of the Bride," and "Who rejoices on holidays." Nevertheless, a complete study of *The Zohar* entails systematic learning of the material. The more accustomed we are to Kabbalah, the more it permeates our hearts, and it can only be mastered by repeatedly reviewing the studied material.

*Rav Michael Laitman*



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

**AA**—*Arich Anpin*—the *Partzuf* of *Hochma*, the central, initial *Partzuf* in the world of *Atzilut*, from which all the other *Partzufim* originate.

**Aba**—Father —the *Partzuf* of *Hochma*.

**Ima**—Mother—the *Partzuf* of *Bina*.

**ZA**—*Zeir Anpin*—Son (with regard to *AVI*).

**ZON**—*ZA* and *Nukva*—*Malchut*.

**Nukva, Malchut**—a *Sefira* (singular for *Sefirot*) or *Partzuf* that receives from all the preceding *Partzufim* (plural for *Partzuf*). *Malchut* of the world of *Atzilut* is the sum of all the creatures, all human souls. For this reason it is called *Knesset Israel* (The Assembly of Israel).

**Israel**—the property of “bestowal,” altruism. This is the property of the Creator, the property of *Bina*. *Israel* derives from the Hebrew words *Yashar*—straight, and *El*—the Creator. Thus, *Israel* is the property of aspiring to attain equivalence of form with the Creator. The “nations of the world” are the aspiration to selfish reception of pleasure. Naturally, these two properties are present in everyone, and Kabbalah is the method for the development of the property of *Israel* within man, with the purpose of attaining the Creator in this life.

**Kli** (vessel) egoistic desires and aspirations are not considered a *Kli*. A *Kli* is the corrected desires, suitable for reception of Light. These are altruistic desires with a screen that has transformed them from egoism into altruism.

The human heart that receives all sensations is called the *Kli* (vessel) of reception of sensations. The spiritual vessel, the only vessel that *The Zohar* speaks of, is the desire to bestow upon the Creator: to hand over all of man’s desires to the Creator, as though saying that he agrees with all his heart to relinquish all of himself for His sake. Such a complete and true intention is called “*Lishma*” (for the Creator’s sake).

SEFIROT	THE CREATOR'S NAMES
KETER	EKYEH=Aleph-Hey-Yod-Hey
HOCHMA	YAH= Yod-Hey
BINA	HaVaYaH with Nikud Elokim
HESED	EL=Aleph-Lamed
GEVURA	ELOKIM= Aleph-Lamed-Hey-Yod-Mem
TIFFERET	HaVaYaH with Nikud of Shvah-Holam-Kamatz
NETZAH and HOD	TZEVAOT
YESOD	SHADDAY=Shin-Dalet-Yod or EL=Aleph-Lamed CHAI=Chet-Yod
MALCHUT	ADNI=Aleph-Dalet-Nun-Yod

**Mittuk** (sweetening/mitigation) of a restriction law. Restriction is a ban for *Malchut* to receive Light. This ban is lifted when *Malchut* is corrected by the properties of *Bina*.

**Zivug**—coupling—is translated as a sexual union between a man and a woman in this world. Since spiritual actions are *absolutely detached* from the way we would normally perceive them, I have chosen to use the Hebrew term *Zivug*, as it is more abstractly perceived by people with no knowledge of Hebrew. This will help prevent confusions based on previously existing conceptions. The spiritual *Zivug* is an aspiration of the Upper One (ZA—male part) to pass the Light (pleasure) to the lower one (*Malchut*—female part). In doing so, both desires are completely selfless, as in the example of the guest and the host.

**PBP**—*Panim be Panim* (face to face). This state occurs when a *Zachar* (male *Sefira*), or *Aba* (father), passes *Ohr Hochma* (Light of Wisdom) to the female *Sefira*, or *Ima* (mother), for the subsequent transfer to the children (ZON). The same relationships of ABA (see below) and PBP also transpire between their children, ZON (ZA and *Malchut*).

**ABA** – *Achor be Achor*, back to back (pronounced *Ach be Ach*). If *Partzuf Aba* (*Hochma*) has *Ohr Hochma*, but is unwilling to pass it on to *Partzuf Ima* (*Bina*), and if *Ima* also does not want to receive it, such a relationship between them is called back to back. The same relationship can exist between ZA and *Malchut*.

**Hesed**—mercy, compassion, altruism, *Ohr Hassadim* (the Light of Mercy, compassion, and altruism). It appears only within a *Kli* (desire) that wishes to

give selflessly and be similar to the Creator. This is the property of the *Sefira* or *Partzuf* of *Bina*. *Bina* of the world of *AK* (*Adam Kadmon*) is called *SAG*. *Bina* of the world of *Atzilut* is called *Ima*, the Supernal Mother, *YESHSUT*, and *AVI*. The Light of *Bina* is the pleasure of being similar to the Creator's properties; hence, this Light (sensation) is the most reliable protection from the impure forces. And the *Kli* that possesses the properties of *Bina* is unable to transgress, as its desire is solely to bestow.

**KHB**—*Keter-Hochma-Bina* (pronounced *Kahab*). These are the first three *Sefirot* that form the *Rosh* (head) of the *Partzuf*. The *Rosh* decides how much pleasure the *Partzuf* can accept not for its own sake but for the sake of the Creator. This Light descends from the *Rosh* to the *Guf* (body).

**HBD**—*Hochma-Bina-Daat* (pronounced *Habad*). This is the same as *Keter-Hochma-Bina* (the *Rosh* of the *Partzuf*). *Sefira Daat* is not a *Sefira*, but the request (also known as *MAN*) of *ZON* (*Zeir Anpin* and *Nukva*). *Daat* is the appeal of *ZON* to *Bina* regarding their desire to receive *Ohr Hochma* from her. This prayer of *ZON* is called *MAN*, for it ascends to *Bina* and evokes in *Bina* (*Ima*—their mother) the desire to bestow upon her children—*ZON*. *MAN* in *Bina* is called *Sefira Daat*. This is not a *Sefira* like the other ten *Sefirot*; it is rather a request. However, to stress this state, we use the name *HBD* instead of *KHB*.

**HGT**—*Hesed-Gevura-Tifferet* (pronounced *Hagat*). These are the *Sefirot* of the *Guf* (body), similar to the *Sefirot* of the *Rosh*: *Hesed* is tantamount to *Keter*, *Gevura* is tantamount to *Hochma*, and *Tifferet* is tantamount to *Bina*. They are called *GE* (see below) of the body.

**NHYM**—*Netzah-Hod-Yesod-Malchut* (pronounced *Nehim*). These *Sefirot* receive from the *Sefirot* *HGT* (*GE*). Since they receive and have the will to receive, they are called *AHP* of the body.

**GE**—*Galgalta-Eynaim* (skull and eyes). *Sefirot* *Keter-Hochma* and *GAR* of *Bina*. These *Sefirot* do not have the will to receive and wish only to bestow. Hence, they cannot become egoistic.

**NRN**—*Nefesh-Ruach-Neshama* (pronounced *Naran*). This is the Light that fills the small *Partzuf*. *Katnut* (small state) is when the *Partzuf* has the strength (a screen) only to bestow, but is unable to receive for the Creator's sake, despite its desire to do so. In this case, the *Partzuf* has only *Ohr Hassadim* (Light of Mercy), but not *Ohr Hochma* (Light of Wisdom). This is why it is considered a small *Partzuf*, without strength and reason, similar to a child in our world.

**AHP**—*Awzen-Hotem-Peh* (ear-nose-mouth), pronounced *Ahap*. These are *Sefirot* *ZAT* of *Bina-ZA-Malchut*, which possess a will to receive. Therefore, in the

absence of a proper screen (resistance to that desire), they become egoistic. A *Partzuf* without a screen on its *AHP* is called *Katan* (small) and its state is called *Katnut* (smallness, incompleteness). It is like a child in our world, as this *Partzuf*, too, has no strength (screen), and can therefore have only *Ohr Hassadim* without *Ohr Hochma*).

**Gadlut**—big state. A *Partzuf* with a screen (strength to resist its egoistic nature) to not only refrain from receiving for its own sake, but to receive not for its own sake (as in the example of the guest and the host. In this case, the *Partzuf* fills all of its desires (all ten *Sefirot*) with the Lights of *Hassadim* and *Hochma*.

**First Big State**—*Gadlut Aleph*, the attainment of the Light of *Neshama*.

**Second Big State**—*Gadlut Bet*, the attainment of the Light of *Haya*.

**Ohr Hochma**—Light of Wisdom. This Light fills the *Kelim* (vessels/desires) of reception. It comes only if there is a screen on altruistic reception.

**Ateret Yesod**—literarily “foreskin,” the place of union between Israel and the Creator. After the second restriction, it is forbidden to make a *Zivug* (spiritual coupling) on *Malchut* herself due to the absence of the screen. However, a *Zivug* can be made on the properties that *Malchut* received from *ZA*, called *Ateret Yesod*. Just as the desires of *Malchut* herself are cut off, the foreskin is circumcised, and the desires that remain within her are those received from *ZA*, called *Ateret Yesod*. On these desires, *Malchut* can make a *Zivug* with *ZA*, and receive the Light of *Hochma*. Naturally, this is not the same Light of *Hochma* that *Malchut* would receive if she were able to make a *Zivug* on her desires, that is, on herself, on her own properties, called “the central point of creation,” the truly egoistic desires. *Malchut* will be able to do that only after 6,000 years, at the end of correction. But before that happens, these desires are called the mark of union with the Creator, since a *Zivug* on *Ateret Yesod* brings her closer to the Creator.

*Ateret Yesod* is also *Malchut de Malchut* that remains after the circumcision, the removal of the *Orla* (foreskin). This is the corrected part of *Malchut*, her unification with *Sefira Yesod*, upon which a *Zivug* can be made while still during the 6,000 years, thus bringing *Malchut* to the end of correction.

**NRNHY**—*Nefesh-Ruach-Neshama-Haya-Yechida* (pronounced **Naranhay**). This Light fills the big *Partzuf*, consisting of *GE* and *AHP*.

**Ohr** (Light)—pleasure, the sensation of the Creator. *Ohr* should always be interpreted as the same concept, for although the term is used in general, all of its synonyms are implied!

**Kli** (vessel)—desire, creature. Like *Ohr*, the word *Kli* is used in general, but all of its synonyms are implied!

**Gematria**—numerical value of a letter, or a combination of letters and words. This is a special way of recording spiritual information.

**Parsa**—firmament, the division between the world of *Atzilut* and the worlds *BYA*. The *Parsa* divides the ten *Sefirot* into two parts: the altruistic *Kelim* of bestowal (*GAR*, *KHB*, and *GE*) and the *Kelim* of reception (*ZON* or *Bina-ZA-Malchut*), for *Bina* deliberately fell into *ZA* (*AHP*) with the purpose of correcting him. *Malchut*, which ascends above *Bina* and stands below *Hochma*, is called *Parsa* or “firmament,” and separates *GE* from *AHP*.

**ZAT, ZAK**—the seven *Sefirot* *Hesed*, *Gevura*, *Tifferet*, *Netzah*, *Hod*, *Yesod*, *Malchut* (*HGT NHYM*).

**VAT, VAK**—the six *Sefirot* *Hesed*, *Gevura*, *Tifferet*, *Netzah*, *Hod*, *Yesod* (*HGT NHY*, pronounced *Hagat Nehy*).

**De** – the preposition ‘of’ in a possessive meaning. For example, *Malchut de Atzilut* means *Malchut of* the world of *Atzilut*.

**English translation**—Whenever it says so in parenthesis, this refers to the books of the Torah (Pentateuch), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Writings/Hagiographa), published by Mosad HaRav Kook, in Hebrew with English translation. For example, (*Yeshayahu*, 11:9; English translation p. XXX, 9) means that if you open page XXX in the book of Prophets, what you are looking for will be in sentence number nine. When the original source is indicated, it is recommended to refer to it there and then to read at least the passage that the quoted saying is ascribed to. This will help you to see even more clearly that the Torah, using an allegorical, figurative language, speaks only of the spiritual world and man’s ascension to it, and not at all about history or about our world.

**Garments**—attributes, desires, *Kelim*. Generally, the garments in question are those that *Malchut* receives from *Bina*.

**Huppah**—a wedding baldachin, a canopy under which a marriage ceremony takes place.

**Nartik**—the covering of *ZA*; same as the *Huppah*.

**Adornments**—the Light of *Hassadim*, Light of *Bina*, which she passes into *Malchut*. This corrects *Malchut*, and enables her to receive the Light of *Hochma* in the Light of *Hassadim*.

**Orla**—foreskin on the *Sefira Yesod*, the place of the *Zivug* between *ZA* and *Malchut*. The *Orla* must be removed, for during the 6,000 years, it is impossible to make

a *Zivug* (intention) on *Malchut* herself and receive for the Creator's sake. Only a *Zivug* on the union of *Malchut* with *ZA* can be made. This is called *Ateret Yesod*, the part of the *Sefira Yesod* that remains after the cutting off of the *Orla*. *Orla* is also *Malchut de Malchut*, or the impure forces.

**Ima**—Mother—*Bina* with regard to *Malchut*, who is the daughter.

**Daughter**—*Malchut* with regard to *Bina*, mother.

**Kodesh ha Kodashim**—Holy of Holies—the Light of *GAR*—*Neshama-Haya-Yechida*.

**Question**—the sensation of lack of the Light of *Hochma* in *Malchut*.

**Sela**—rock or truth. The name of *Malchut*.

**Shechina**—Divinity—the sensation (appearance, vision) of the Creator to those who attain Him. *Malchut* in the state of reception of the Light (the Creator) is called *Shechina*. The sensation of the Creator, the place where one experiences the Creator is called *Shechina*.

**Techum**—zone—the distance beyond the bounds of which one is forbidden to go on *Shabbat* (the Sabbath). *Techum Shabbat* constitutes the maximal distance within which one can move about during Sabbath.

**Sigim**—dross—impure desires that exist within pure desires. Man's work is to separate the two, and to gradually correct the *Sigim*. The term *Sigim* comes from *SAG*, for they appeared as a result of the breaking of the *Kelim* of the world of *Nekudim*, which refer to the system of the *Partzufim* of *Partzuf SAG*. The term *Sigim* found its way from Kabbalah into spoken Hebrew.

**SHACH**—*Shin-Chaf*— $300 + 20 = 320$  fragments of the broken vessel.

**RAPACH**—*Reish-Peh-Chet*— $200 + 80 + 8 = 288$  fragments of the broken vessel, which one can and must be corrected during the 6,000 years, by climbing the 6,000 steps of the spiritual ladder.

**Lev ha Even**—Stony Heart—*Lev = Lamed-Bet =  $30 + 2 = 32$*  fragments into which *Malchut* had broken. These fragments of *Malchut* cannot be corrected and made altruistic; one can only refrain from using these desires. *Lev ha Even* is corrected only after the 6,000 years, that is, after the Creator Himself corrects the 288 fragments within man. It becomes completely altruistic and receives the name *Lev Basar* (heart of flesh).

**Lo Lishma**—not for the sake of the Creator. Since nothing exists in creation but the Creator and man, if something is not done “for the sake of the Creator,” it is done “for one's own sake.” Thus, *Lo Lishma* denotes man's egoistic intention.

**Lishma**—for the Creator’s sake. Man’s selfless intention to act only to please and bring joy to the Creator.

**Four angels that participate in the creation of man**—the four basic properties of nature: mercy—*Hesed*, justice—*Tzedek*, truth—*Emet*, and peace—*Shalom*.

**Eretz Israel**—Land of Israel—*Yetzira* of this world. *Yerushalaim* (Jerusalem) is *Ateret Yesod* in *Malchut*.

### ORIGINAL NAMES AND THEIR EQUIVALENTS ACCEPTED IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Aaron - Aaron	Leah - Leah
Amon - Ammon	Lilit - Lilith
Ana’el - Anahel	Machaniel - Manhiel
Anafiel - Anafiel	Matat - Metatron
Ariel - Ariel	Micha - Micah
Avraham - Abraham	Moav - Moab
Bat Sheva - Bathsheba	Moshe - Moses
Benayahu - Benaiah	Nachum - Nahum
Betzalel - Betzalel	Navuchadnetzar - Nebuchadnezzar
Bil’am - Balaam	Nechemia - Nehemiah
Chagai - Haggai	Noach - Noah
Chava - Eve	Ovadia - Obadiah
Eden - Eden	Petachia - Petahyah
Eicha - Eichah	Pinchas - Pinchas
Elisha - Elisha	Pisgania - Pesagniyah
Eliyahu - Elijah	Rahel - Rachel
Esav - Esau	Rivka - Rebecca
Ester - Esther	Rut - Ruth
Ezra - Ezra	Sandalphon - Sandalphon
Gavri’el - Gabriel	Shet - Seth
Gazaria - Gazardiel	Shimon - Simeon
Hanoch - Eunuch	Shlomo - Solomon
Havakuk - Habakkuk	Shmuel - Samuel
Iyov - Job	Tamar - Tamar
Korach - Korach	Tzefania - Zephaniah

<b>Tzur</b> – Tyre	<b>Yeshayahu</b> – Isaiah
<b>Yaakov</b> – Jacob	<b>Yirmiyahu</b> – Jeremiah
<b>Yehoyada</b> – Jehoiada	<b>Yishmael</b> – Ishmael
<b>Yechezkel</b> – Ezekiel	<b>Yitzchak</b> – Isaac
<b>Yehoshua</b> – Joshua	<b>Yosef</b> – Joseph
<b>Yehudah</b> – Judah	<b>Zachariah</b> – Zechariah
<b>Yerushalaim</b> – Jerusalem	<b>Zvuliel</b> – Zebuliel

### ORIGINAL TITLES AND THEIR EQUIVALENTS ACCEPTED IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

<b>Beresheet</b> – Genesis
<b>Shemot</b> – Exodus
<b>Vayikra</b> – Leviticus
<b>Bamidbar</b> – Numbers
<b>Devarim</b> – Deuteronomy
<b>Kohelet</b> – Ecclesiastes
<b>Shmuel 1 and 2</b> – Samuel 1 and 2
<b>Melachim 1 and 2</b> – Kings 1 and 2
<b>Divrey HaYamim</b> – Chronicles
<b>Mishley</b> – Proverbs
<b>Tehilim</b> – Psalms
<b>Shir HaShirim</b> – Song of Songs
<b>Shoftim</b> – Judges

AN EXAMPLE OF THE ORIGINAL  
TEXT OF THE ZOHAR

א) רבי חזקיה פתחת כתיב, כשושנה בין החוחים. מאן שושנה, דא כנסת ישראל. בגין דאית שושנה ואית שושנה, מה שושנה דאיהי בין החוחים אית בה סומק וחור, אוף כנסת ישראל אית בה דין ורחמי. מה שושנה אית בה תליסר עלין אוף כנסת ישראל אית בה תליסר מכילן דרחמי דסחרין לה מכל סטרהא. אוף אלקים דהכא, משעתא דאדכר, אפיק תליסר תיבין לסחרא לכנסת ישראל ולנטרא לה.

ב) ולבתר אדכר זמנא אחרא. אמאי אדכר זמנא אחרא, בגין לאפקא חמש עלין תקיפין דסחרין לשושנה. ואינון חמש, אקרון ישועות. ואינון חמש תרעין. ועל רזא דא כתיב, כוס ישועות אשא, דא כוס של ברכה. כוס של ברכה אצטריך למהוי על חמש אצבען ולא יתיר, כנונא דשושנה דיתבא על חמש עלין תקיפין דוגמא דחמש אצבען. ושושנה, דא איהו כוס של ברכה, מאלקים תניינא עד אלקים תליתאה חמש תיבין. מכאן ולהלאה, אור דאתברי ואתגניז, ואתכליל בברית ההוא דעאל בשושנה ואפיק בה זרעא. ודא אקרי עץ קיימא באות ברית ממש.

ג) וכמה דדיוקנא דברית אודרע בארבעין ותרין זווגין ההוא זרעא. כך אודרע שמא גליפא מפרש, בארבעין וותרין אתוון דעובדא דבראשית.

ד) בראשית. רבי שמעון פתח הנצנים נראו בארץ, הנצנים דא עובדא דבראשית. נראו בארץ, אימתי, ביום השלישי, דכתיב ותוצא הארץ, כדין נראו בארץ. עת הזמיר הגיע, דא יום רביעי, דהוה ביה זמיר עריצים, מארת חסר. וקול התור, דא יום חמישי, דכתיב ישרצו המים וגו', למעבד תולדות. נשמע דא יום ששי, דכתיב נעשה אדם, דהוה עתיד למקדם עשיה לשמיעה דכתיב הכא נעשה אדם, וכתיב התם נעשה ונשמע. בארצנו, דא יום שבת, דאיהו דוגסת ארץ החיים.

ה) ד"א הנצנים אלין אינון אבהן, דעאלו במחשבה, ועאלו בעלמא דאתי, ואתגניזו תמן. ומתן נפקו בגניזו ואסמירו גו נביאי קשומ, אתיליד יוסף, ואסמרו ביה. עאל יוסף בארעא קדישא ונציב לון תמן, וכדין נראו בארץ ואתגלו תמן. ואימתי אתחזן. בשעתא דאתגלי קשת

בעלמא, דהא בשעתא דקשת אתחזי כדין אתגליין אינון, ובההיא שעתא עת הזמיר הגיע עדן לקצץ חייבין מעלמא. אמאי אשתזיבו. בגין דהנצבים נראו בארץ, ואלמלא דנראו לא אשתארון בעלמא, ועלמא לא אתקיים.

ו) ומאן מקיים עלמא וגרים לאבהן דאתגליין, קל ינוקי דלעאן באורייתא, ובגין אינון רביין דעלמא, עלמא אשתזיב. לקבליהון, תורי זהב נעשה לך, אלין אינון ינוקי רביין עולמין, דכתיב ועשית שנים כרובים זהב.

ז) בראשית. ר' אלעזר פתח, שאו מרום עיניכם וראו מי ברא אלה. שאו מרום עיניכם. לאן אתר. לאתר דכל עיינין תליאן ליה, ומאן איהו. פתח עינים. ותמן תנדעון, דהאי סתים עתיקא דקיימא לשאלה, ברא אלה. ומאן איהו, מ"י. ההוא דאקרי מקצה השמים לעילא, דכלא קיימא ברשותיה. ועל דקיימא לשאלה, ואיהו בארע סתים ולא אתגליא, אקרי מ"י דהא לעילא לית תמן שאלה. והאי קצה השמים אקרי מ"י.

ח) ואית אחרא לתתא ואקרי מ"ה, מה בין האי להאי, אלא קדמאה סתימאה דאקרי מ"י קיימא לשאלה, כיון דשאל בר נש ומפשפש לאסתכלא ולמנדע מדרגא לדרגא עד סוף כל דרגין, כיון דמטי תמן מ"ה, מה ידעת, מה אסתכלתא, מה פשפשתא, הא כלא סתים כדקדמיתא.

ט) ועל רזא דנא כתיב, מה אעידך מה אדמה לך. כד אתחריב בי מקדשא, נפיק קלא ואמר, מה אעידך ומה אדמה

לך, בהוא מ"ה אעידך, בכל יומא ויומא אסהידת בך מיומין קדמאין. דכתיב העדותי בכם היום את השמים ואת הארץ. ומה אדסה לך, בהוא גוונא ממש, עתרית לך בעטרין קדישין, עבדית לך שלטנו על עלמא, דכתיב הזאת העיר שיאמרו כלילת יפי וגו'. קרינא לך ירושלם הבנויה בעיר שחברה לה. מה אשוה לך, כגוונא דאנת יתבה, הכי הוא כביכול לעילא, כגוונא דלא עאלין השתא בך עמא קדישא בסדרא קדישין, הכי אומינא לך דלא איעול אנא לעילא עד דיעלון בך אוכלסך לתתא. ודא איהו נחמה דילך, הואיל דדרגא דא אשוה לך בכלא. והשתא דאנת הנא, גדול כים שברך. ואי תימא דלית לך קיימא ואסוותא, מ"י ירפא לך, ודאי ההוא דרגא סתימאה עלאה, דכלא קיימא ביה, ירפא לך ויוקים לך.

(י) מ"י קצה השמים לעילא, מ"ה קצה השמים לתתא, ודא ירית יעקב דאיהו מבריה מן הקצה אל הקצה, מן הקצה קדמאה דאיהו מ"י, אל הקצה בתראה דאיהו מ"ה, בגין דקאים באמצעיתא. ועל דא, מי ברא אלה.

(יא) אמר ר"ש אלעזר בני פסוק מילך, ויתגלי סתימא דרוא עלאה דבני עלמא לא ידעין. שתיק רבי אלעזר. בכה רבי שמעון, וקאים רגעא חדא. א"ר שמעון, אלעזר, מאי אלה. אי תימא ככביא ומזלי, הא אתחזן תמן תדיר. ובמ"ה אתבריאו, כד"א בדבר ה' שמים נעשו. אי על מלין סתימין, לא לכתוב אלה דהא אתגלייא איהו.

(יב) אלא רוא דא לא אתגליא, בר יומא חד דהוינא על כיוף ימא, ואתא אליהו ואמר לי, ר' ידעת מה הוא מי ברא אלה. אמינא ליה, אלין שמיא וחיליהון, עובדא דקב"ה דאית ליה לבר נש לאסתכלא בהו, ולברכא ליה, דכתיב כי אראה

שמ"ך מעשה אצבעותיך וגו' ה' ארונינו מה אדיר שמך בכל הארץ.

יג) א"ל, ר': מלה סתימה הוה קמי קב"ה, וגלי במתיבתא עלאה, ודא הוא. בשעתא דסתימא דכל סתימין בעא לאתגלייא, עבד ברישא נקודה חדא, ודא סליק למהוי מחשבה. צייר בה כל ציורין חקק בה כל גליפין.

יד) ואגליף גו בוצינא קדישא סתימא גליפו דחד ציורא סתימאה קדש קדישין בנינא עמיקא דנפיק מגו מחשבה, ואקרי מ"י שירותא לבנינא קיימא ולא קיימא. עמיק וסתים בשמא. לא אקרי אלא מ"י. בעא לאתגלייא ולא תקרי בשמא דא, ואתלבש בלבוש יקר דנהיר, וברא אל"ה, וסליק אל"ה בשמא. אתחברון אתוון אל"ן באל"ן ואשתלים בשמא אלהים. ועד לא ברא אלה לא סליק בשמא אלהים. ואינון דחבו בעגלא. על רזא דנא אמרו אלה אלהיך ישראל.

טו) וכמה דאשתתף מ"י באלה, הכי הוא שמא דאשתתף תדיר,

ברזא דא אתקיים עלמא. ופרת אליהו ולא חמינא ליה. ומניה ידענא מלה דאוקימנא על רזא וסתרא דילה. אתא רבי אלעזר וכלהו חברייה ואשתתחו קמיה, בכו ואמרו, אלמלא לא אתינא לעלמא אלא למשמע דא די.

א



## מאמר השושנה

א) פתח, כתיב ר (ר) א כשושנה בין החוחים. מאן שושנה, דא ב) ב) כנסת ישראל. ב בגין דאית שושנה ואית שושנה, ג מה שושנה דאיהי בין ג) החוחים

## חלופי גרסאות

א נ"א כשושנה בין החוחים מה שושנה דא דאיהי בין החוחים וכו' (אור הלכנה). ב נ"א בגין דאית שושנה ואית שושנה ל"ג. ג נ"א ד"א מה שושנה דאיהו בין החוחים וכו' (אה"ל).

## מסורת הזהר

א) (שיר ב) ב"א אות רצח תולדות יח ויחי רלד שמות חסד כי תשא לא שמיני לט אמור שלג חקת יח פנחס סח שצג שצח ואתחנן סו האזינו י יב ת"ז תכ"ה דף עא. תכ"ו שם תל"ח דף עח : ז"ח יתרו יב. ב) יתרו ששה.

דרך אמת א) רחל. ב) לאח כלת משה מלגאו. ג) רחל.

## השושנה

## הסולם

## מאמר

חכמה, בינה, תפארת ומלכות, משום שספירת התפארת כוללת בתוכה שש ספירות חג"ת נה"י. והן נעשו חמש פרצופין: א"א, וא"א, וז"ן, הכתר נק' בשם אריך אנפין. חכמה ובינה נק' בשם אבא ואמא. ת"ת ומלכות, נק' בשם זעיר אנפין ונוקבא. (ביאורן של עשר הספירות ע"י בפתיחה לחכמת הקבלה אות ה').

ודע, שסוד ז' ימי בראשית ה"ס ב' הפרצופין ז"א ונוקבא דאצילות, שיש בהם ז' ספירות חג"ת נה"י ומלכות, כנ"ל. אשר באלו הכתובים דמעשה בראשית מתבאר, איך אבא ואמא, שהם חו"ב, האצילו אותם מתחילת התהוותם עד סוף הגדלות, שנוהג בהם בהמשך שתא אלפי שני. וענין זה מתבאר והולך כאן בזהר בראשית.

ור' חזקיה פתח בביאור הנוקבא ד"ד"א לבאר סדר אצילותה מאמא, שהיא הבינה הנק' בשם

א) ר' חזקיה פתח וכו': ר' חזקיה פתח, כתוב, כשושנה בין החוחים. שואל מהי שושנה. ומשיב, זו היא כנסת ישראל. שהיא מלכות. משום שיש שושנה ויש שושנה. מה שושנה בין החוחים יש בה אדום ולבן אף כנסת ישראל יש בה דין ורחמים. מה שושנה יש בה י"ג עלים, כך כנסת ישראל יש בה י"ג מדות הרחמים המסבבות אותה מכל צדדיה. אף אלקים, שבמקרא שבכאן דהיינו בראשית ברא אלקים, משעה שנוכר, הוציא י"ג מלים לסבב את כנסת ישראל ולשמרה. שהן: את, השמים, ואת, הארץ, והארץ, היתה, תהו, ובהו, וחשך, על, פני, תהום, ורוח, דהיינו עד אלקים מרחפת וגו'.

ביאור הדברים, עשר ספירות הן, בתר, חכמה, בינה, חסד, גבורה, תפארת, נצח, הוד, יסוד ומלכות. ועיקרן הוא רק חמש, בתר, (דפ"י דף א' ע"א)

## הקדמת ספר הזוהר

ב

אית בה (ג) סומק וחזור, אוף כנסת (ד) ישראל אית בה (ה) דין (ו) ורחמי. מה שושנה  
אית בה (ז) תליסר עלין, אוף כנסת ישראל אית בה (ח) תליסר מכילין דרחמי

### מסורת הזוהר

(ג) ב"א ע' תולדות טו וישלה יא ויחי תקח ויקרא רכנ אמור שלג האוינו קסב ת"ז תל"ו דף עז : עשה ולא תעשה ת"ק"ח דף קצא : (ד) ויחי רלו אמור שלג האוינו קעז. (ה) פנחס שצד ת"ז תכ"ה דף עא. תכ"ו שם. (ו) ב"א קיב קכו ויצא שטו יתרו תקיב תצוה כ ויקהל קנה אחרי קפד נשא צו שם קכא קסד שם פנחס רפו שסו שצד תרמו כי תצא יז ת"ז תכ"ב דף סו. ז"ח בראשית מו ת"ק"ח דף ק. קא. קיג.

דרך אמת (ז) לאה. (ח) ולא גזון. (ו) י"ב דידיה וי"ב דידיה והכוללים.

השושנה

הסולם

מאמר

נשארת בה בחינת דין, בי היא נצרכת לסוד המסך המתוקן בה לצורך הזווג דהכאה, שמסבת הדין שבמסך, הוא מכה על האור העליון ומחזירו לאחוריו, ומעלה עי"ז ע"ס דאור חוזר הנקרא אור של דין, וממשיך בתוכו ע"ס דאור ישר, הנקרא אור של רחמים. (ע"י בפתוחה לחכמת הקבלה אות י"ד) וע"כ גם בכנסת ישראל אית בה דין ורחמי כנגד הסומק והחזור שיש לשושנה בין החוחים.

ו"ז"ס הים שעשה שלמה, העומד על שני עשר בקר. כי אלו טה"ס התחתונות שלה שנפלו לבריאה, כנ"ל, נתתקנו שם בסוד שני עשר בקר, ונקודת הכתר שנשארה באצילות ה"ס הים העומד עליהם מלמעלה, וכללותם יחד נק' תליסר עלין דשושנה, וענין ההתחלקות הזו של עה"ס שלה לסוד י"ג מתבאר להלן במראות הסולם.

והנה המוחין דגדלות של הנוקבא, שיש בהם מהארת החכמה, הם נמשכים מסוד י"ג השמות הנק' י"ג מדות הרחמים. וז"ש אוף כ"ו אית בה י"ג מכילין דרחמי. והעיקר מה שבא ר' חזקיה להורות בהשואה הזו משושנה דבין החוחים לכנסת ישראל, הוא ללמדנו, שכל שיש לנוקבא במצב גדלותה צריך להמצא בה כנגדן בחי' הכנה והכשר עוד בתחילת היותה דהיינו במצב הקטנות, וז"ש, שכנגד חזור וסומק דקטנות יוצא בה דין ורחמי בגדלות, וכנגד י"ג עלין דקטנות יוצא בה י"ג מדות הרחמים בגדלות. והוא מביא זאת כאן, בכדי ללמדנו איך הכתובים שלפנינו מבארים אותם ב' הסדרים דקטנות וגדלות, הנהיגים באצילות הנוקבא, כמו שממשיך והולך, אוף אלהים דהכא וכי.

ו"ז"ש, אוף אלהים וכי' אפיק י"ג תיבין : מורה, שאלהים שבמקרא דהכא בראשית

בשם אלהים. וזהו שפתח בביאור השושנה, שהיא הנוקבא דז"א. והנוקבא דז"א בעת גדלותה נקראת בשם כנסת ישראל, במ"ש להלן, וזהו שאומר, מאן שושנה, דא כנסת ישראל.

ויש בשושנה זו ב' מצבים : מצב של קטנות, דהיינו של תחלת התהוותה, שאז אין בה אלא ספי' אחת כתר, שבתוכה מלוכש אור הנפש שלה, וט' הספירות התחתונות שלה נבחנות כנופלות לבר מאצילות. והן בעולם הבריאה. ועוד בה מצב של גדלות, שאז מתעלות ט"ס התחתונות שלה מן עולם הבריאה אל עולם האצילות, והיא נבנית עמהן לפרצוף שלם בעשר ספירות. ואז עולה עם ז"א בעלה לקומה שוה עם או"א דאצילות ומלבישים אותם. ואז נק' ז"א, בשם ישראל. שהוא אותיות לי ראש, והנוקבא נק' בשם כנסת ישראל, על שם שכונסת בתוכה כל האורות של ישראל בעלה שהיא משפעת אותם אל התחתונים.

והמצב של הקטנות נק' בשם שושנה בין החוחים, משום שט"ס התחתונות שלה נתרוקנו מאור האצילות, ונשארו כחוחים. והמצב של הגדלות נק' בשם שושנה סתם, או כנסת ישראל. וזה אמרו אית שושנה ואית שושנה.

והנה גזון סומק מורה שיש שם אחיזה לחיצונים ולקליפות לינק ממנה, וזהו בזמן המצב של הקטנות, שט"ס התחתונות שלה הן בבריאה, ויש בה ג"כ בחינת חזור, דהיינו בכלי דכתור שלה, שאין שם אחיזה לחיצונים. וז"ש מה שושנה דאיהי בין החוחים אית בה סומק וחזור, אוף כנסת ישראל אית בה דין ורחמי להורות כי גם בגדלותה בעת שנקראת כנסת ישראל, אע"פ שעולה אז ומלבישה את הבינה במצב גדלותה כנ"ל, מ"מ (דפ"י דף א' ע"א)

## ג

## הקדמת ספר הזהר

דסחרין לה מכל סטרהא. אוף אלהים (ז) דהכא, משעתא דאדכר, אפיק (ז) תליסר תיבין לסחרא לכנסת (ח) ישראל (ז) ולנטרא לה.

(ב) ולבתר אדכר זמנא אחרא, אמאי אדכר זמנא אחרא, בגין (ט) לאפקא (ח) חמש עלין תקיפין דסחרין לשושנה. ואינון חמש, אקרון ישועות. ואינון

חלופי גרסאות

ד ולנטלא (אה"ל).

מסורת הזהר

(ז) פנחס שצו ת"ז תכ"ו דף ע"א. (ח) פנחס שצו ת"ז תכ"ו דף ע"א. תל"ח דף ע"ח. תק"ח ק"ו:

דרך אמת (ז) פ"י אימא. (ח) לאה. (ט) אימא אפיק ה' גבורות מנצפ"ך להושיעס מן הקליפות.

השושנה

הסולם

מאמר

ביאור הדברים, חמש עלין תקיפין: ה"ס ה"ג של הנוקבא, שהן ע"ס דאו"ח, שהנוקבא מעלה על ידי זווג דהכאה באור העליון, הנק' אור של דין, (כנ"ל ד"ה סומק) כי עה"ס דאור ישר נק' ה' חסדים חג"ת נ"ה, והן מתלבשות בה' גבורות חג"ת נ"ה דאו"ח, ואלו חמש עלין תקיפין הן, כחות הדין שבמסך, המעכב את האור העליון מהתלבש ממסך ולמטה. וע"כ נק' עתה רק ה' עלין תקיפין, כי עוד אינה ראויה לזווג עליהם. ובזמן הגדלות כשהמסך בא בזווג עם האור העליון הם נק' ה' גבורות. כנ"ל.

ואלו ה' עלין תקיפין ה"ס ה' תיבות שיש מאלקים תנינא עד אלהים תליתאה, שהן: מרחפת על פני המים ויאמר. וז"ש אמאי אדכר זמנא אחרא, שמשמע שיש כאן פעולה חדשה, ואומר, שהוא כדי להוציא מהנוקבא ה' עלין תקיפין אלו, שהם הכנה לזווג בזמן הגדלות.

ומה שאלו ע"ס דאו"ח נקראות ה"ג שהן חג"ת נ"ה ואינון נקראות כח"ב תו"מ, כנ"ל. הענין הוא, מפני שאינון ממשיכות אלא אור חסדים לבד, ולכן ירדו כח"ב ממעלתם ונקראים חג"ת, ות"ת ומלכות נק' בשם נו"ה.

וז"ש, חמש תרעין וכו' כוס ישועות: היינו בעת הגדלות, שה' עלין תקיפין נעשו לה' גבורות, אז הם נבחים לחמש תרעין, שהם שערים פתוחים לקבל ה' חסדים דאור ישר, וכן הם נקראים ישועות מטעם זה, ואן נק' הנוקבא כוס ישועות או כוס של ברכה, כי בסגולתן נעשית הנוקבא כלי מחזיק הברכה, שהיא הי"ח הנ"ל.

הנה

בראשית ברא אלהים, שה"ס הבינה המאצלת לנוקבא דו"א, אפיק י"ג מלים שהן: את השמים ואת הארץ והארץ היתה תוהו ובוהו ותוהו על פני תהום ורוח, דהיינו עד אלהים תנינא, שאלו י"ג תיבין רומזים על אותם י"ג עלין של שושנה בין החוחים בסוד הים העומד על שני עשר בקר, כנ"ל, שהם הכנה והכשר לכנסת ישראל שתקבל י"ג מכילן דרחמי. וז"ש, לסחרא לכנסת ישראל ולנטרא לה, כי י"ג מדות הרחמים, שהן המוחין השלמים דנוקבא, נבחנות שהן מסבבות ומאירות אליה מכל הצדדים סביב סביב, ונשמרת על ידיהן ממגע החיצונים, כי כל זמן שאין בה המוחין הגדולים בהארת החכמה מי"ג מדות, יש בה יניקה לחיצונים.

(ב) ולבתר אדכר וכו': ואח"כ נזכר שם אלקים פעם אחרת, דהיינו אלקים מרחפת וגו'. ולמה נזכר פעם אחרת, הוא כדי להוציא חמשה עלים קשים המסבבים את השושנה, ואלו חמשת העלים נקראים ישועות, והם חמשה שערים, ועל סוד זה כתוב, כוס ישועות אשא, זו היא כוס של ברכה, כוס של ברכה צריכה להיות על חמש אצבעות ולא יותר, כמו השושנה היושבת על חמשה עלים קשים, שהם כנגד חמש אצבעות, ושושנה זו היא כוס של ברכה, מהשם אלקים השני עד שם אלקים השלישי חמש מלים, שהן: מרחפת על פני המים ויאמר, שהן כנגד ה' עלים הנ"ל מכאן ולהלאה, שנאמר, אלקים יהי אור וגו', הוא האור שנברא ונגנז ונכלל בברית ההוא שנכנס בשושנה והוציא בה זרע, וזה נקרא עץ עושה פרי אשר זרעו בו, והזרע ההוא נמצא באות ברית ממש.

(דטו"י דף א' ע"א)

## LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE AFORECITED TEXT FROM ARAMAIC INTO ENGLISH<sup>3</sup>

1. Rabbi Hizkiyah opened, "It is written, as a rose among thorns." That a rose is the Assembly of Israel. Because there is a rose and there is a rose, just as a rose among thorns is tinged with red and white, the Assembly of Israel consists of judgment and mercy. Just as a rose has thirteen petals, the Assembly of Israel is surrounded on all sides by the thirteen attributes of mercy. However, *Elokim*, that is here, thought to bring out the thirteen words that surround the Assembly of Israel and guard it.

2. Afterwards, this is mentioned another time. The reason it is mentioned another time is to bring out the five rigid leaves that surround the rose. And these five stand for salvation. These are also the five gates.

It is written of this secret, "I will raise the cup of salvation, it is the cup of blessing." The cup of blessing must rest on five fingers, and no more, just as a rose rests on five rigid leaves that correspond to the five fingers. And this rose is the cup of blessing. From the second to the third mention of the name *Elokim*, there are five words. From here on, the Light was created and concealed, enclosed within that covenant, and entered the rose and fructified it. And this is referred to as a fructiferous tree, wherein is the seed thereof. And this seed truly exists in the letter of the covenant.

3. And just as the form of the covenant is sown in forty-two conceptions from that seed, so is the legislative, special name of creation sown.

4. In the beginning, Rabbi Shimon opened, the flower buds appeared on the earth. "The flower buds" refer to the act of creation. They appeared on the earth when, on the third day, as it is said, "And the earth shall pullulate." That was when they appeared on the earth. The time of singing has come, and this is the fourth day, when there was a reduction from the Light of *Hassadim*. The voice of the turtle dove refers to the fifth day, where it is written, "Let the waters swarm," so as to produce offspring. "It is heard" refers to the sixth day, where it is written, "Let us stand and create man," and there it is said, "We will do and we will hear." "In our land" refers to the day of *Shabbat*, which represents the Land of Life.

5. Another meaning is that these flower buds are the Patriarchs who entered the thoughts of the future world, and there they are concealed. They emerged from

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<sup>3</sup> The translation in the book is semantic and not literal

there in concealment, and concealed themselves in the true prophets. Yosef was born and they concealed themselves in him. When Yosef entered the Holy Land and founded them there, they appeared in the land (earth) and were revealed there. When are they seen? When a rainbow is seen in the world. It is when the rainbow is seen that they are revealed. As the time of pruning has come. The time has come to eradicate the wicked from the world. Why were the wicked saved? Because the flower buds can be seen in the earth. And if they could not be seen, they would not have remained in the world, and the world would not be able to exist.

6. Who animates the world and causes the Fathers to appear? It is the voice of the children, who study the Torah, meaning that these children of the world save the world. In deference to them, "We will make you pendants of gold." Those are the children, children of the world, as is it said, "You shall make two Cherubs of gold."

7. In the beginning, Rabbi Elazar opened, "Raise your eyes above and see who has created this." Raise your eyes. To what place? To the place where all eyes depend on Him. And who is He? He is one who opens eyes. And you will know this. It is the concealed *Atik*, wherein lies the question, who has created this. And who is He? *MI* = who. He is called from the edge of Divine Heaven, where everything belongs to Him. As there is a question, He is along a concealed path, and does not reveal Himself. He is called *MI*, as there is no question Above, this edge of Heaven is called *MI*.

8. And there is another below, called *MA*. What is between this and that? The first one, called *MI*, is concealed. There is a question in him, because man asks, searches and looks, and beholds from degree to degree until the end of all the degrees. And after he arrives there, he is asked: *MA*? (What?). What have you learned? What have you seen? What have you investigated, since everything is still concealed, just as it was before.

9. It is written of this secret, "Who can I point out to you? Who can I compare you to?" After all, the Temple was destroyed, and a voice came forth and said, "What can I point out to you, and what can I compare you to?" The word *MA* = what, testimony, each day and the day of testimony to you from the days of past, as it is written: "I call to witness Heaven and earth," which is like unto you.

According to the same type, "I adorned you with holy ornaments," made you ruler over the world, as it is written: "Is this the city that was called the quintessence of beauty?" and so forth. I have called you, "Jerusalem, a city built by me." "What could be compared to you?" Just as you sit, so he is like Above,

just as now the holy nation does not enter into you to perform holy work, so I swear to you that I will not enter Above until I dwell down below. This is your consolation, as this degree is equal to you in all things. And now that I am here, “Your misery is great, like the sea.” And if you claim that there is no existence or remedy for you, then *MI* (who) shall heal you? It shall be precisely that concealed Supernal Degree, which animates all things; it shall heal you, and exist within you.

10. *MI* is the upper edge of Heaven, *MA* is the lower edge of Heaven. This was inherited by Yaakov, that he shines from edge to edge, from the first edge, which is *MI*, until the last edge, which is *MA*, for he stands in the middle. Therefore, who has created this?

11. Rabbi Shimon said: Elazar, my son, stop talking and reveal to us the supernal secret, which the people of the world know nothing of. Rabbi Elazar was silent. Rabbi Shimon wept and said: One minute. Rabbi Shimon said: Elazar, what is *ELEH* (these)? If you say the stars and the signs of the zodiac, have they not always been seen? However, *MA* (what) were created, as it is said, by the word of the Creator were the Heavens made. If it is about concealed things, then it is not written *ELEH*, because they are revealed.

12. But this secret was never revealed, until one day when I was at the seashore, Eliyahu came and told me: “Rabbi, do you know what this is, WHO HAS CREATED THIS?” I told him: “These are the Heavens and their hosts, the works of the Creator, that man can look at them and bless them, as is written, ‘When I behold Your Heavens, the work of Your hands, our Master, how glorious Your name is throughout all the earth!’”

13. He told me: “Rabbi, there was one thing concealed before the Creator, which He revealed to the Supernal Assembly, and it is this. When the concealed of all the concealed desired to reveal Himself, He first made one single point, and this point ascended and became a Thought. With it, He drew all the forms and with it engraved all the images.”

14. He engraved inside a concealed, sacred candle an image of a concealed image of the holy of holies. A profound structure emerged from the depth of that thought, and it is called *MI* – who, which is the inception of the structure both standing and not standing, which is hidden deep inside the name. It is not called, but only *MI* – who. He desired to reveal Himself and to be called this name, so He clothed Himself in a precious, radiant garment and created *ELEH*, and *ELEH* ascended in name. These letters combined with these, and the name *Elokim* was completed. And until He created *ELEH* – this, *Elokim* did not ascend

to form the name *Elokim*. And these sinned in worshipping the golden calf. Of this secret it is said, *ELEH* is your Lord, Israel.

15. Just as the letters *MI* joined the letters *ELEH*, so does this name remain forever united, and on this secret stands the world. Eliyahu then flew away, and I could not see him. It is from him that I knew this, which stands on the secret, and its explanation. Rabbi Elazar has come, and all the disciples, too, and they bowed down before him, wept and said, if we had (not) come into this world but only to hear this secret, it would have been enough.

16. Rabbi Shimon said, "Onto these Heavens and their hosts were created in *MA*, as it is said, 'When I behold the Heavens, the works of Your hands,' and it is said, 'MA, how glorious Your name is throughout all the earth, which You set Above the Heavens, it ascends in name.' That is why it created Light for Light, clothed this into this, and elevated in the Supernal Name, this the Creator created in the beginning. This is the Supernal Creator, for *MA* is not such and was not created."

## APPENDIX ONE FURTHER READING

To help you determine which book you would like to read next, we have divided the books into five categories—Beginners, Intermediate, Advanced, All Around, and Textbooks. The first three categories are divided by the level of prior knowledge readers are required to have. The Beginners Category requires no prior knowledge. The Intermediate Category requires reading one or two beginners' books first; and the Advanced level requires one or two books of each of the previous categories. The fourth category, All Around, includes books you can always enjoy, whether you are a complete novice or well versed in Kabbalah.

The fifth category—textbooks—includes translations of authentic source materials from earlier Kabbalists, such as the Ari, Rav Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam) and his son and successor, Rav Baruch Ashlag (the Rabash).

Additional translated material that has not yet been published can be found at [www.kabbalah.info](http://www.kabbalah.info). All materials on this site, including e-versions of published books, can be downloaded free of charge.

### BEGINNERS

#### *Kabbalah for Beginners*

*Kabbalah for Beginners* is a book for all those seeking answers to life's essential questions. We all want to know why we are here, why there is pain, and how we can make life more enjoyable. The four parts of this book provide us with reliable answers to these questions, as well as clear explanations of the gist of Kabbalah and its practical implementations.

Part One discusses the discovery of the wisdom of Kabbalah, and how it was developed, and finally concealed until our time. Part Two introduces the gist of the wisdom of Kabbalah, using ten easy drawings to help us understand the structure of the spiritual worlds, and how they relate to our world. Part Three reveals Kabbalistic concepts that are largely unknown to the public, and Part Four elaborates on practical means you and I can take, to make our lives better and more enjoyable for us and for our children.

### ***Kabbalah Revealed***

This is a clearly written, reader-friendly guide to making sense of the surrounding world. Each of its six chapters focuses on a different aspect of the wisdom of Kabbalah, illuminating the teachings and explaining them using various examples from our day-to-day lives.

The first three chapters in *Kabbalah Revealed* explain why the world is in a state of crisis, how our growing desires promote progress as well as alienation, and why the biggest deterrent to achieving positive change is rooted in our own spirits. Chapters Four through Six offer a prescription for positive change. In these chapters, we learn how we can use our spirits to build a personally peaceful life in harmony with all of Creation.

### ***Wondrous Wisdom***

This book offers an initial course on Kabbalah. Like all the books presented here, *Wondrous Wisdom* is based solely on authentic teachings passed down from Kabbalist teacher to student over thousands of years. At the heart of the book is a sequence of lessons revealing the nature of Kabbalah's wisdom and explaining how to attain it. For every person questioning "Who am I really?" and "Why am I on this planet?" this book is a must.

### ***Awakening to Kabbalah***

A distinctive, personal, and awe-filled introduction to an ancient wisdom tradition. In this book, Rav Laitman offers a deeper understanding of the fundamental teachings of Kabbalah, and how you can use its wisdom to clarify your relationship with others and the world around you.

Using language both scientific and poetic, he probes the most profound questions of spirituality and existence. This provocative, unique guide will inspire and invigorate you to see beyond the world as it is and the limitations of your everyday life, become closer to the Creator, and reach new depths of the soul.

***Kabbalah, Science, and the Meaning of Life***

Science explains the mechanisms that sustain life; Kabbalah explains why life exists. In *Kabbalah, Science, and the Meaning of Life*, Rav Laitman combines science and spirituality in a captivating dialogue that reveals life's meaning.

For thousands of years Kabbalists have been writing that the world is a single entity divided into separate beings. Today the cutting-edge science of quantum physics states a very similar idea: that at the most fundamental level of matter, we are all literally one.

Science proves that reality is affected by the observer who examines it; and so does Kabbalah. But Kabbalah makes an even bolder statement: even the Creator, the Maker of reality, is within the observer. In other words, God is inside of us; He doesn't exist anywhere else. When we pass away, so does He.

These earthshaking concepts and more are eloquently introduced so that even readers new to Kabbalah or science will easily understand them. Therefore, if you're just a little curious about why you are here, what life means, and what you can do to enjoy it more, this book is for you.

***From Chaos to Harmony***

Many researchers and scientists agree that the ego is the reason behind the perilous state our world is in today. Laitman's groundbreaking book not only demonstrates that ego has been the basis for all suffering throughout human history, but also shows how we can turn our plight to pleasure.

The book contains a clear analysis of the human soul and its problems, and provides a "roadmap" of what we need to do to once again be happy. *From Chaos to Harmony* explains how we can rise to a new level of existence on personal, social, national, and international levels.

**INTERMEDIATE*****The Kabbalah Experience***

The depth of the wisdom revealed in the questions and answers within this book will inspire readers to reflect and contemplate. This is not a book to race through, but rather one that should be read thoughtfully and carefully. With this approach, readers will begin to experience a growing sense of enlightenment while simply absorbing the answers to the questions every Kabbalah student asks along the way.

*The Kabbalah Experience* is a guide from the past to the future, revealing situations that all students of Kabbalah will experience at some point along their journeys. For those who cherish every moment in life, this book offers unparalleled insights into the timeless wisdom of Kabbalah.

### ***The Path of Kabbalah***

This unique book combines beginners' material with more advanced concepts and teachings. If you have read a book or two of Laitman's, you will find this book very easy to relate to.

While touching upon basic concepts such as perception of reality and Freedom of Choice, *The Path of Kabbalah* goes deeper and expands beyond the scope of beginners' books. The structure of the worlds, for example, is explained in greater detail here than in the "pure" beginners' books. Also described is the spiritual root of mundane matters such as the Hebrew calendar and the holidays.

## **ADVANCED**

### ***The Science of Kabbalah***

Kabbalist and scientist Rav Michael Laitman, PhD, designed this book to introduce readers to the special language and terms of the authentic wisdom of Kabbalah. Here, Rav Laitman reveals authentic Kabbalah in a manner both rational and mature. Readers are gradually led to understand the logical design of the Universe and the life that exists in it.

*The Science of Kabbalah*, a revolutionary work unmatched in its clarity, depth, and appeal to the intellect, will enable readers to approach the more technical works of Baal HaSulam (Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag), such as *The Study of the Ten Sefirot* and *The Book of Zohar*. Readers of this book will enjoy the satisfying answers to the riddles of life that only authentic Kabbalah provides. Travel through the pages and prepare for an astonishing journey into the Upper Worlds.

### ***Introduction to the Book of Zohar***

This volume, along with *The Science of Kabbalah*, is a required preparation for those who wish to understand the hidden message of *The Book of Zohar*. Among the many helpful topics dealt with in this text is an introduction to the "language of roots and branches," without which the stories in *The Zohar* are mere fable and legend. *Introduction to the Book of Zohar* will provide readers with

the necessary tools to understand authentic Kabbalah as it was originally meant to be, as a means to attain the Upper Worlds.

### ***The Zohar***

*The Book of Zohar (The Book of Radiance)* is an ageless source of wisdom and the basis for all Kabbalistic literature. Since its appearance nearly 2,000 years ago, it has been the primary, and often only, source used by Kabbalists.

For centuries, Kabbalah was hidden from the public, which was deemed not yet ready to receive it. However, our generation has been designated by Kabbalists as the first generation that is ready to grasp the concepts in *The Zohar*. Now, we can put these principles into practice in our lives.

Written in a unique and metaphorical language, *The Book of Zohar* enriches our understanding of reality and widens our worldview. Although the text deals with one subject only—how to relate to the Creator—it approaches it from different angles. This allows each of us to find the particular phrase or word that will carry us into the depths of this profound and timeless wisdom.

## **ALL AROUND**

### ***Attaining the Worlds Beyond***

From the introduction to *Attaining the Worlds Beyond*: “...Not feeling well on the Jewish New Year in September 1991, my teacher called me to his bedside and handed me his notebook, saying, ‘Take it and learn from it.’ The following morning, my teacher perished in my arms, leaving me and many of his other disciples without guidance in this world.

“He used to say, ‘I want to teach you to turn to the Creator, rather than to me, because He is the only strength, the only Source of all that exists, the only One who can really help you, and He awaits your prayers for help. When you seek help in your search for freedom from the bondage of this world, help in elevating yourself above this world, help in finding the self, and help in determining your purpose in life, you must turn to the Creator, who sends you all those aspirations in order to compel you to turn to Him.’”

*Attaining the Worlds Beyond* holds within it the content of that notebook, as well as other inspiring texts. This book reaches out to all those seekers who want to find a logical, reliable way to understand the world’s phenomena. This fascinating introduction to the wisdom of Kabbalah will enlighten the mind, invigorate the heart, and move readers to the depths of their souls.

### ***Basic Concepts in Kabbalah***

This is a book to help readers cultivate an *approach to the concepts* of Kabbalah, to spiritual objects, and to spiritual terms. By reading and re-reading in this book, one develops internal observations, senses, and approaches that did not previously exist within. These newly acquired observations are like sensors that “feel” the space around us that is hidden from our ordinary senses.

Hence, *Basic Concepts in Kabbalah* is intended to foster the contemplation of spiritual terms. Once we are integrated with these terms, we can begin to see, with our inner vision, the unveiling of the spiritual structure that surrounds us, almost as if a mist has been lifted.

Again, this book is not aimed at the study of facts. Instead, it is a book for those who wish to awaken the deepest and subtlest sensations they can possess.

### ***Together Forever***

On the surface, *Together Forever* is a children’s story. But like all good children’s stories, it transcends boundaries of age, culture, and upbringing.

In *Together Forever*, the author tells us that if we are patient and endure the trials we encounter along our life’s path, we will become stronger, braver, and wiser. Instead of growing weaker, we will learn to create our own magic and our own wonders as only a magician can.

In this warm, tender tale, Michael Laitman shares with children and parents alike some of the gems and charms of the spiritual world. The wisdom of Kabbalah is filled with spellbinding stories. *Together Forever* is yet another gift from this ageless source of wisdom, whose lessons make our lives richer, easier, and far more fulfilling.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

### ***Shamati***

Rav Michael Laitman’s words on the book: Among all the texts and notes that were used by my teacher, Rabbi Baruch Shalom Halevi Ashlag (the Rabash), there was one special notebook he always carried. This notebook contained the transcripts of his conversations with his father, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Halevi Ashlag (Baal HaSulam), author of the *Sulam* (Ladder) commentary on *The Book of Zohar*, *The Study of the Ten Sefirot* (a commentary on the texts of the Kabbalist, Ari), and of many other works on Kabbalah.

Not feeling well on the Jewish New Year in September 1991, the Rabash summoned me to his bedside and handed me a notebook, whose cover contained only one word, *Shamati* (I Heard). As he handed the notebook, he said, “Take it and learn from it.” The following morning, my teacher perished in my arms, leaving me and many of his other disciples without guidance in this world.

Committed to Rabash’s legacy to disseminate the wisdom of Kabbalah, I published the notebook just as it was written, thus retaining the text’s transforming powers. Among all the books of Kabbalah, *Shamati* is a unique and compelling creation.



## APPENDIX TWO ABOUT BNEI BARUCH

**B**nei Baruch is a group of Kabbalists in Israel, sharing the wisdom of Kabbalah with the entire world. Study materials in over 20 languages are based on authentic Kabbalah texts that were passed down from generation to generation.

### HISTORY AND ORIGIN

In 1991, following the passing of his teacher, Rabbi Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag (The Rabash), Rav Michael Laitman, Professor of Ontology and the Theory of Knowledge, PhD in Philosophy and Kabbalah, and MSc in Medical Bio-Cybernetics, established a Kabbalah study group called “Bnei Baruch.” He called it Bnei Baruch (Sons of Baruch) to commemorate the memory of his mentor, whose side he never left in the final twelve years of his life, from 1979 to 1991. Rav Laitman had been Ashlag’s prime student and personal assistant, and is recognized as the successor to Rabash’s teaching method.

The Rabash was the firstborn son and successor of Rabbi Yehuda Leib HaLevi Ashlag, the greatest Kabbalist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Rabbi Ashlag authored the most authoritative and comprehensive commentary on *The Book of Zohar*, titled *The Sulam Commentary (The Ladder Commentary)*. He was the first to reveal the complete method for spiritual ascent, and thus was known as Baal HaSulam (Owner of the Ladder).

Today, Bnei Baruch bases its entire study method on the path paved by these two great spiritual leaders.

### THE STUDY METHOD

The unique study method developed by Baal HaSulam and his son, the Rabash, is taught and applied on a daily basis by Bnei Baruch. This method

relies on authentic Kabbalah sources such as *The Book of Zohar*, by Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai, *The Tree of Life*, by the Holy Ari, and *The Study of the Ten Sefirot*, by Baal HaSulam.

While the study relies on authentic Kabbalah sources, it is carried out in simple language and uses a scientific, contemporary approach. Developing this approach has made Bnei Baruch an internationally respected organization, both in Israel and in the world at large.

The unique combination of an academic study method and personal experiences broadens the students' perspective and awards them a new perception of the reality they live in. Those on the spiritual path are thus given the necessary tools to research themselves and their surrounding reality.

## THE MESSAGE

Bnei Baruch is a diverse movement of many thousands of students worldwide. Students can choose their own paths and the personal intensity of their studies, according to their unique conditions and abilities. The essence of the message disseminated by Bnei Baruch is universal: unity of the people, unity of nations and love of man.

For millennia, Kabbalists have been teaching that love of man should be the foundation of all human relations. This love prevailed in the days of Abraham, Moses, and the group of Kabbalists that they established. If we make room for these seasoned, yet contemporary values, we will discover that we possess the power to put differences aside and unite.

The wisdom of Kabbalah, hidden for millennia, has been waiting for the time when we would be sufficiently developed and ready to implement its message. Now, it is emerging as a solution that can unite diverse factions everywhere, better enabling us, as individuals and as a society, to meet today's challenges.

## ACTIVITIES

Bnei Baruch was established on the premise that "only by expansion of the wisdom of Kabbalah to the public can we be awarded complete redemption" (Baal HaSulam).

Therefore, Bnei Baruch offers a variety of ways for people to explore and discover the purpose of their lives, providing careful guidance for the beginners and the advanced students alike.

***Kabbalah Today***

*Kabbalah Today* is a free monthly paper produced and disseminated by Bnei Baruch. It is apolitical, non-commercial, and written in a clear, contemporary style. Its purpose is to expose the vast body of knowledge hidden in the wisdom of Kabbalah at no cost and in a clear, engaging format and style for readers everywhere.

*Kabbalah Today* is distributed for free in every major U.S. city, as well as in Toronto, Canada, London, England, and Sydney, Australia. It is printed in English, Hebrew, and Russian, and is also available on the Internet, at [www.kabtoday.com](http://www.kabtoday.com).

Additionally, a hard copy of the paper is sent to subscribers at delivery cost only.

***Internet Website***

Bnei Baruch's homepage, [www.kabbalah.info](http://www.kabbalah.info), presents the authentic wisdom of Kabbalah using essays, books, and original texts. It is the largest Kabbalah website on the net, and contains a unique, extensive library for readers to thoroughly explore the wisdom of Kabbalah. Additionally, there is a media archive, [www.kabbalahmedia.info](http://www.kabbalahmedia.info), containing more than 5,000 media items, downloadable books, and a vast reservoir of texts, video and audio files in many languages. All of this material is available for free download.

***Kabbalah Television***

Bnei Baruch established a production company, ARI Films ([www.arifilms.tv](http://www.arifilms.tv)) specializing in production of educational TV programs throughout the world, and in many languages.

In Israel, Bnei Baruch broadcasts are aired live through cable and satellite on Channel 98 Sunday through Friday. All broadcasts on these channels are free of charge. The programs are adapted specifically for beginners, and do not require prior knowledge of the material. This convenient learning process is complemented by programs featuring Rav Laitman's meetings with publicly known figures in Israel and throughout the world.

Additionally, ARI Films produces educational series and documentaries on DVDs, as well as other visual teaching aids.

***Kabbalah Books***

Rav Laitman writes his books in a clear, contemporary style based on the key concepts of Baal HaSulam. These books serve as a vital link between today's readers and the original texts. All of Rav Laitman's books are available for sale,

as well as for free download. Rav Laitman has thus far written thirty books, translated into ten languages.

### ***Kabbalah Lessons***

As Kabbalists have been doing for centuries, Rav Laitman gives a daily lesson at the Bnei Baruch center in Israel between 3:15-6:00 a.m. Israel time. The lessons are simultaneously translated into six languages: English, Russian, Spanish, German, Italian, and Turkish. In the near future, broadcasts will also be translated into French, Greek, Polish, and Portuguese. As with everything else, the live broadcast is provided gratis to thousands of students worldwide.

### ***Funding***

Bnei Baruch is a non-profit organization for teaching and sharing the wisdom of Kabbalah. To maintain its independence and purity of intentions, Bnei Baruch is not supported, funded, or otherwise tied to any government or political organization.

Since the bulk of its activity is provided free of charge, the prime source of funding for the group's activities is donations, tithing—contributed by students on a voluntary basis—and Rav Laitman's books, which are sold at cost.

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