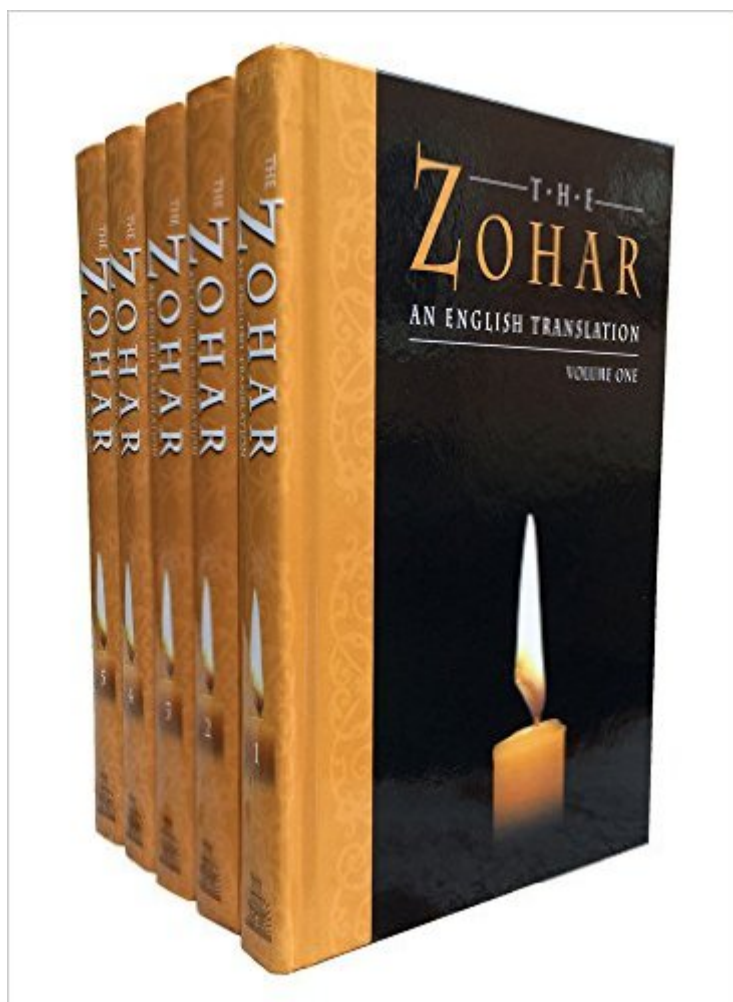


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Zohar (5 Volume Set)



Synopsis

This five-volume set is the only complete English rendering of The Zohar, the fundamental rabbinic work on Jewish mysticism that has fascinated readers for more than seven centuries. In addition to being the primary reference text for kabbalistic studies, this magnificent work is arranged in the form of a commentary on the Bible, bringing to the surface the deeper meanings behind the commandments and biblical narrative. As The Zohar itself proclaims: Woe unto those who see in the Law nothing but simple narratives and ordinary words Every word of the Law contains an elevated sense and a sublime mystery The narratives of the Law are but the raiment Thin which it is swathed.

Book Information

Hardcover: 2085 pages

Publisher: Soncino Pr Ltd; 2nd edition (September 1, 1984)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0900689390

ISBN-13: 978-0900689390

Product Dimensions: 7 x 5.8 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (14 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #676,856 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #30 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Sacred Writings > Zohar #440 inÂ Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Judaism

Customer Reviews

Despite the length (over 2000 pages) this English translation is only a part of the actual Sepher ha Zohar (Book of Splendor). The rest was to a large degree untranslatable due to its symbology, plays on words, etc. Yet, the authors (and it took a team to do it) did a great service to Kabbalah in particular and mysticism in general but completing this herculean effort. The Zohar presents itself as a Midrash or commentary on the Bible. This is an ancient literary form. It attributes its authorship to Shimon bar Yohai, an ancient Kabbalistic master who is also the main character in the book. To a large degree, the book is about the wanderings of this itinerant master with his disciples--especially their discussions and encounters. Gershom Scholem attributes the work to Moses de Leon in medieval Spain. de Leon claimed that he discovered the text but didn't write it. Moshe Idel argues that de Leon (judging from his other works, for example) could not have written it alone, was

evidently part of a Kabbalistic circle of masters including Joseph Gikatilla, and that it was written by the group (perhaps based on a discovered scrap or fragment). Who knows? The work stands on its own as the reputedly greatest Kabbalistic work of all time. However, anyone at all familiar with Kabbalah knows how steeped in symbolism it was. Indeed, much of it was passed on by word of mouth. Thus, publication of the Zohar was a watershed event. The only other great work that might rival it, Moses Cordovero's "Garden of Pomegranates," has not been translated into English, unfortunately. The Simon, Sperling, et al translation is by far the most comprehensive (as far as I know) and does include some descriptions and analysis, but it is most definitely NOT a commentary on the Zohar.

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