

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY HEBREW BOOK

Volume One

— An Abridged Thesaurus —



by

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BRILL



1558, *Toledot Yizhak*, Isaac ben Joseph Caro, Mantua

Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary



וְאֵל מִשָּׁה בַּמְדַּבֵּר סִינִי בְּהַלְמוֹעַד וְנֹרָא רִאֲכָא פִּתְמָא וַיְכַרְ לְדָוִי אֶת הָאָדָם כְּנַלְמוּ וְנֹרָא
 הָאִוְקָרָא אֶתְמָא יִתְמָא כְּשֶׁעַת דְּכִרָא קִבְּהָ לְאָדָם עֲבָד לִיָּה כְּדִיוֹקֵךְ דְּעֵלְאִי וְתֵתְאִי וְהוּסָה
 כְּלִיל מְכַלָּא וְקוּהָ כְּסוּרִיָּה כְּהִיר מְסִיפִי עֵלְמָא עַד סִיפִי עֵלְמָא וְהוּוּ דְמַלְיָן מְכִיָּה כְּלָא וְאֵעֵב
 דְּהָא אִוְקָמוּהָ אִוְתֵּלְאִסְתְּכֵלְוּ בִּוְהָ כְּהָאִוְ קָרָא וַיְכַרְ לְדָוִי אֶת הָאָדָם כְּנַלְמוּ כְּנַלְמָא לְדָוִי
 כִּיּוֹן דְּאִמֵּר כְּנַלְמוּ מְאִו כְּנַלְמָא לְדָוִי אֶלְא וְדִאִוְתֵּרִין דְּרַנְיָן דְּכִלְיָן דְּכִר וְנִוְקָבָא מִד
 לְדָבֵר וְמִד לְנִוְקָבָא וְכִיּוֹן כִּךְ דִּו פִּרְטוּפִין הוּוּ וְדִאִוְ וְסִפְּא דְקָרָא אִוְכָא דְכֵּתִיב זִכֵּר
 וְנִקְבָּה בְּרָא אִוְתֵּם וְכִלְיָן הוּוּ מְכַל סְטֵרוּי וְאֵעֵב דְּנִוְקָבָא אִוְתֵּרִיָּה כְּסְטֵרוּי הָא כְּמִו כְּלִיל
 מְתֵרִין סְטֵרִין לְמַהִו שְׁלִים כְּכִלָּא וְהוּוּ מְכַתְּלָא כְּמְכַתְּלָא לְעוּלָא וְתֵתְאִי כִּיּוֹן דְּסֵרִם
 אִתְמַעְטוּ פִּרְטוּפִין וְכִמְתְּאִי אִסְתְּלַקְתָּ מְכִיָּה וְלָא הוּוּ מְכַתְּלָא אֶלְא כְּמִלִּי דְּנִוְסִיָּה
 לְכִתְרָא אִוְלִיד כְּכִין מְעֵלְאִי וְתֵתְאִי וְלָא אִתְּיִשְׁכּוּ דָּא וְדָא עַד דְּאִוְלִיד כֵּר וְמִכִּיָּה אִשְׁתְּלִים
 (סָא אִשְׁתֵּל) עֵלְמָא דְּאִקְרִי שְׁתֵּי וְהוּוּ אִוְקָמוּהָ וְעַכְדָּא עֵלְמָא תֵּתְאִי לָא אִשְׁתְּלִים וְלָא
 הוּוּ סָאִים וְלָא אִשְׁתְּכַח בְּקִיּוּמִיָּה עַד דְּאִתְּא אִכְרֵהִם וְאִתְּקִיּוּם עֵלְמָא אִכְלָלָא אִשְׁתְּלִים
 עַד דְּאִכְרֵהִם אִשְׁתְּכַח בִּוְהָ כְּעֵלְמָא וְאִתְּיִד בִּוְהָ כִּיּוּמִיָּה כְּמֵאֵן דְּאִתְּיִד בִּוְתִיבִיָּה לְמֵאֵן
 דְּכִפִּילָא וְתֵתְאִי וְכִמְקִיָּה וְאִתְּיִד בִּוְדִיָּה דְּעֵלְמָא כְּשִׁמְלָא וְאִתְּקִיּוּם וְתֵתְאִי וְעַקְב
 אִתְּיִד בִּוְהָ עֵלְמָא וְלָא הוּוּ מְתִוּוּטָא וְעַס כֵּל דָּא לָא אִשְׁתִּיל (סָא אִשְׁתֵּל) כְּשֵׁרִשׁוּ עַד
 וְחִילִיד תְּרִיבֵר שְׂבִטִין וְשְׂבִטִין כְּפִשְׁאֵן וְאִשְׁתִּיל (סָא וְאִתְּלִים) עֵלְמָא וְעַכְדָּא לָא
 אִשְׁתְּלִים עַד דְּקִבְּלִיָּה יִסְרָאֵל אִוְרִיתָא כְּטֵרָא דֵּם נִוְ וְאִתְּקִים מְשַׁכְּנָא כְּדִין אִתְּקִיּוּמוּ
 עֵלְמִין וְאִתְּכִסִּיּוּ עֵלְמִין וְתֵתְאִין כִּיּוֹן דְּאִוְרִיתָא וְמְשַׁכְּנָא אִתְּקִיּוּמוּ כְּעַא קִבְּהָ לְמִתְּקֵד
 וְיִ אִ 16 i חִילִי

1558-60, *Zohar*, Simeon bar Yohai (attributed to), Mantua
 Courtesy of the Library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad Ohel Yosef Yitzhak

Zohar
ספר הזוהר

Simeon bar Yohai (attributed to)
1558–60, Mantua—Meir ben Ephraim of Padua and
Jacob ben Naphtali ha-Kohen of Gazolo

Classic kabbalistic work of Jewish mysticism, attributed to the *tanna* R. Simeon bar Yohai (second century). Written in Aramaic and Hebrew, *Sefer ha-Zohar al ha-Torah* is a comprehensive system of kabbalistic theosophy, encompassing cosmology, the soul, and good and evil. It is an esoteric commentary on the Torah, with homilies, midrashic passages, parables, and numerous discursive passages. It is based on the concept that scriptures possess a concealed stratum, deciphered by Kabbalah, expressing the inner meaning of the Torah, with its “splendor, beauty, and greatness.”

The title page has the architectural frame typical of Mantua imprints. The editors were R. Immanuel ben Gabriel Kuropoli and Abraham ben Meshullam Modena. The entire work is in three volumes: on Genesis; on Exodus; and the last, on Leviticus through Deuteronomy. The work is set thirty-two lines to a page, in a single column. The editor was R. Immanuel ben Jekuthiel of Benevento. Several volumes include verse in praise of the work. There are two types of rabbinic letters, with headings and initial words in two sizes of square letters. Eight paper stocks (several countermarked) were used. Benevento used ten manuscripts to prepare the text, selecting the two best; he subsequently acquired another manuscript from Safed with which he finalized the text.

There was considerable Jewish opposition to the printing of the *Zohar*, the opponents including important kabbalists, who felt that its esoteric contents were not for the masses. Those in favor, among them R. Isaac Joshua Lattes of Pesaro, whose permission to print is included in the first volume, and Moses Basola of Pesaro, saw in its printing an opportunity to save the generation from the religious and ethical corruption threatening those not engaged in the study of Kabbalah. Furthermore, it provided an alternative to the study of the Talmud, now banned, and was a tool in the battle against philosophy. That there was a market for such a work is evidenced by the fact that before this edition was completed another publisher, Vincenzo Conti, published a rival edition in Cremona (1559–60, see below, pp. 502–03). It has been suggested that the rival editions were directed to different export markets, that of Mantua to the Levant, of Cremona to northern Europe. Permission to print also came from the Cardinal Archbishop of Mantua and Jacobus Geraldinus (an apostate), Commissarius by appointment of the Pope, who declared it free of matter offensive to the Church. Such approval would be short-lived, however, for the *Zohar* would soon be included in the index.

The *Zohar* is traditionally attributed to R. Simeon bar Yohai, who wrote it during the thirteen years he hid in a cave, together with his son Eliezer, from the Romans. Among those challenging this accreditation are R. Jacob Emden (Yavez, 1697–1776) in *Mitpahat Sefarim* (1768), writing that the *Zohar* contains numerous modern interpolations. More recently, and more aggressively, many modern scholars contend that the *Zohar* is a later, pseudepigraphic work, the true author being the Spanish kabbalist, R. Moses ben Shem Tov de Leon (c. 1240–1305). Other scholars, however, offer refutations, arguing for the antiquity of the *Zohar*.

Format 8^o: 251, 269, 300 leaves. Reprinted in Cremona (1559–60).



כי עסקך מקור חיים באהבה יראה אור

**ספר
מקור חיים**

כי אור על התורה אל החכם הכולל כל שמואל
 זרחהץ זלתי - המכונה בלשון קדש אכן סנה
 און נחקר להבין משל וחלונה דברי חכמים
 אל ביהרשיהם - וכחמרות טועים
 אם לו דברי החכם ר' אברהם ז'
 עורא והרמבם זל ותעלומותיהם
 הוכיח לאור - ויאסוף עליהם
 דברי בעלי אבות החכם
 ר' שמואל ז' תבון ויהי
 אם טוב ז' פלקירה
 וזולתם שלמים
 וכן רבים -

והונה בפיון רב עי' החכם ביהר שמואל קיום וכו'
 ככמר משה קיום זלטה כדפם

פה מנטובה

תחת מטלת פעלת אלוככו מדוכים גולילינו גוואנס
 יל'ם - נקחי ראשית עלאככו ברא אדר ט'ם לפק
 עי' השוקטים הם הסופר כמר מאיר ינו בבקר
 אפרים וכל מפרובה
 ויעקב בכמר נפתלי הכהן זל מנאוולן

1559, *Mekor Hayyim*, Samuel ibn Seneh Zarza, Mantua

Courtesy of the Library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad Ohel Yosef Yitzhak



1559-60, *Zohar*, Simeon bar Yohai (attributed to), Cremona

Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary

Zohar
ספר הזוהר

Simeon bar Yohai (attributed to)
1559–60, Cremona—Vincenzo Conti

Classic kabbalistic work of Jewish mysticism, attributed to the *tanna* R. Simeon bar Yohai. This is the second edition of the *Zohar* (Book of Splendor), the first printing being that of Meir ben Ephraim of Padua and Jacob ben Naphtali ha-Kohen of Gazolo in Mantua (1558–60, see above, pp. 484–85), at which time Vincenzo Conti brought out this rival edition.

The title page has a decorative architectural frame with figurines in the bottom squares and cherubim at the top along the sides. Above the arch is the vignette of *Akedat Yizhak*, surmounted by an eagle, subsequently used in Venice, Padua and Cracow. Initial words of biblical books are set in a border comprised of sections used on the title pages of other, smaller books printed by Conti. The title page notes several enhancements to this edition, such as the inclusion of *Midrash Ruth*, which were not printed. It is dated, “‘For the Lord will not forsake י״ט (319 = 1559) his people [for his great name’s sake]’ (I Samuel 12:22), and it was completed in the year ה״ש (5320 = 1560).” The colophon dates the completion to Friday, *Rosh Hodesh* Kislev, 5319 (November 21, 1558), certainly an error. The colophon further informs that the correctors were Hayyim ben Samuel ibn Gattino and “Vittorio Eliano, grandson of the foremost grammarian, Elijah Bahur Ashkenazi Segal,” this last an apostate.

The title page is followed by the introduction, in which this edition is praised and contrasted to the Mantua edition, which is disparaged. Among the differences, in fact, between the two are that this edition is a folio, printed in a single volume, with the text in two columns in square letters, in contrast to the Mantua edition, which is a three-volume quarto, with the text in a single column in rabbinic letters. Although this is the more attractive of the two, it is the Mantua edition that is the more highly regarded. Additional features of this edition are that each biblical book has its own double pagination, that is, folios are numbered twice, once by folio and once by column. Six manuscripts were used in preparing the text, different from those used in Mantua, resulting in variances in their arrangements of portions of the text, such as the inclusion here of *Sifra de-Zeniuta* in *Bereshit*, normally printed after *Terumah*. Conditions of Hebrew printing, apart from Eliano’s participation at the press, are much evident. There is an imprimatur from the Inquisition on the title page, the sole Cremona imprint to place it there, as well as a longer permission at the end of the book. The introduction contains an allusion to the fact that type was set on Shabbat; within the text the letters ע״ז (idol worshippers) are added to the words עַמּוּיִן (peoples) and אֻמּוֹת (nations).

Although begun later than the Mantua edition, this printing, done in haste, was completed earlier. Nevertheless, it was not immediately released for sale, for when more than 10,000 Hebrew books were burned in Cremona, with the complicity of Eliano, the entire edition was seized. It was just barely saved, in contrast to other works, by the apostate Dominican, Sixtus of Siena. It is known as the *Zohar Gadol* (large *Zohar*), in contrast to the smaller Mantua edition (*Zohar Katan*), and is also referred to, because of Eliano’s involvement, as the “Christian edition.” This notwithstanding, the Cremona edition was the preferred of the two editions by eastern European kabbalists.

Format 2^o: 132, 122, 146 leaves. Printed in Mantua (1558–60).