



## Zohar: Annotated & Explained (SkyLight Illuminations)

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**The best-selling author of *The Essential Kabbalah* now offers readers the best introduction to the *Zohar*.**

The splendor and enigmatic appeal of the *Zohar*, the major text of the Jewish mystical tradition, has never intrigued readers of all faiths more than it does today. But how can we truly understand it?

Daniel C. Matt brings together in one place the most important teachings from the *Zohar*, the cornerstone of Kabbalah?described as a mixture of theology, mystical psychology, anthropology, myth, and poetry?alongside facing-page stories, notes, and historical background that illuminate and explain the text. Ideal for the first-time reader with no prior knowledge of Jewish mysticism.

Guides readers step-by-step through the texts that make up the *Zohar*?midrash, mystical fantasy, commentary, and Hebrew scripture?and explains the inner meanings of this sacred text, recognized by kabbalists as the most important work of mystical teaching, in a way that is both spiritually enlightening and intellectually fascinating.

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**Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #535655 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Skylight Paths Pub
- Published on: 2002-06-01
- Released on: 2002-06-01
- Original language: Hebrew
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .44" w x 5.50" l, .48 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 176 pages



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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

SkyLight Paths continues its Illuminations series with this edition of the Zohar, which series editor Andrew Harvey explains in his foreword is "the cornerstone of Kabbalah." This central text of Jewish mysticism is notoriously recondite and lends itself to multiple interpretations, making its study the life's work of many a Jewish scholar. More recently, individuals of other religious traditions (Exhibit A being Madonna) have begun to dabble in the Zohar, and this edition is particularly geared to them. It is based on short selections rather than the full text, and it offers wonderful facing-page explanations of key concepts and terms, so readers will not have to dig through endnotes looking for information. Matt, a former professor of Jewish mysticism at Berkeley and author of *The Essential Kabbalah*, doesn't "dumb down" the more abstruse passages of the Zohar, and he provides a very effective introduction that outlines its importance for the reader.

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From [Booklist](#)

There are many fine books that explain the *Zohar*, the most important text of the mystical Jewish movement, kabbalah. This one has several advantages, however, over the others. First, it has a wonderful foreword by Harvey, editor of the SkyLight Illuminations series, of which the book is a member. In it Harvey evocatively introduces a kabbalist named Ezekiel, who teaches Harvey about the possibilities and power of the mystic tradition, generally and particularly. Interested readers will be as exhilarated as Harvey is by Ezekiel's provocative statements. Next, the solid preface explains the *Zohar*'s origins, which aren't lost in the mists of time as many believe, and basic concepts. The text proper is the *Zohar* with commentary by translator Matt that explains references to the Bible and Midrash and draws on the writings of Jewish philosophers for further illumination. A fine starting place for most readers interested in Jewish mysticism. *Ilene Cooper*  
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About the Author

**Daniel C. Matt** is a leading authority on the *Zohar* and Kabbalah. He is the author of the best-selling *The Essential Kabbalah* (translated into seven languages); *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment; God and the Big Bang: Discovering Harmony Between Science and Spirituality* (Jewish Lights); and *Zohar: Annotated and Explained* (SkyLight Paths). He was professor of Jewish spirituality for over twenty years at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, and he continues to lecture around the country on Jewish mysticism and spirituality. He is the author of the first nine volumes of the annotated translation *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, hailed as "a monumental contribution to the history of Jewish thought."

**Andrew Harvey** is the author of many critically acclaimed books, including *Son of Man*. His memoir *A Journey in Ladakh* was praised as "one of the best books available on the Western experience of Tibetan spiritual life." His just-published memoir *Sun at Midnight* was praised by Deepak Chopra, who said, "for those who have gone through the dark night of the soul and for those seeking a genuine understanding of spirituality, this is a very inspiring story." Harvey is also the coauthor of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. Born in India, he was the youngest person ever awarded a fellowship to

All Souls College, Oxford. He has devoted the past thirty years of his life to study and experiencing the world's spiritual traditions and is widely recognized as one of our greatest communicators of mysticism and contemplative living today.

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**Livia Wilder:**

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