

Preface

This fourth volume of *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition* covers the first half of Exodus, including Pharaoh's enslavement of the Israelites, the birth of Moses, the deliverance from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the Revelation at Mount Sinai. In exploring the mystical dimension of these dramatic events, the *Zohar* treats the nature of evil and its relation to the divine realm, the romance of Moses and *Shekhinah*, and the inner meaning of the Ten Commandments. In the context of the miraculous splitting of the Red Sea, Rabbi Shim'on reveals the mysterious Name of 72, a complex divine name consisting of 216 letters (72 triads), formed out of three verses in Exodus 14.¹

I am grateful to Margot Pritzker for her enduring devotion to this immense project, and to Rabbi Yehiel Poupko for his sage guidance.

Merav Carmeli continues to comb Aramaic manuscripts of the *Zohar*, preparing lists of variants. This precious material enables me to establish a critical Aramaic text, upon which this translation is based.

The critical Aramaic text corresponding to the first four volumes of *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition* is available on the website of Stanford University Press: www.sup.org/zohar. My brother, Rabbi Jonathan Matt, has kindly and meticulously edited a user-friendly version of this text.²

Professor Ronit Meroz of Tel Aviv University, whose work has dramatically advanced the study of the manuscripts of the *Zohar*, has generously shared with me the data that she has collected relating to hundreds of these manuscripts, along with her analysis. Her research has provided me with a panoramic perspective of the manuscripts, helping me determine their reliability. She has also provided me with her synoptic edition of *Parashat Shemot* (corresponding to Chapter 1), a copy of numerous *Zohar* manuscripts, and her list of manuscripts for each *parashah*. For all this, I thank her deeply.

1. See below, pp. 258–64 and n. 216.

2. For a description of the various online versions of the critical text, see the website. For my methodology in constructing this text, see the website and Volume 1, Translator's Introduction, xv–xviii.

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Sari Segal, working in Jerusalem, has helped to track down various bibliographical treasures.

My wife, Hana, continues to inspire and enlighten me day by day. I thank her for her radiance.

Finally, to the One beyond all names: Blessed are You, who graciously grants knowledge.

D.C.M.