

Sitrei Torah

Secrets of the Torah

Part 1

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Secrets of the Torah

Part 1

By Abraham Abulafia

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and Alexandru Munteanu*

English Edition

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Preface

Secrets of the Torah is the second commentary by Rabbi Abraham Abulafia on the Rambam's Guide for the Perplexed. It was written around 1280.

The Guide has always been one of the favorite sources that Abulafia used to teach *Kabbalah*. He held that it was written in two levels – a simple one for the learned, and a concealed one for the mystic. The kabbalistic level supposedly contains everything that one needs to know in his life for his quest of God, but very few people are aware of this. Thus, Abulafia takes all the keywords in the Guide and organizes them in this wonderful commentary, in order to disclose its secrets. His systematic exposition takes into account every aspect that the sincere seeker needs to know in order to be successful and know his Creator.

While the Guide mostly revolves around the Work of the Chariot, the second kabbalistic level, Abulafia explains many topics concerning the first level, the Work of Creation. Thus, *Secrets of the Torah* is very complete, and ultimately touches the essence of the *Torah* itself.

Guiding the hand of the seeker, Abulafia leads him in his direct experience of God. This is what happens when he approaches the holy gate: “If, heaven forbid, you saw for yourself a strong and brave power that is strange to you, calling you by your name, do not answer it as for a low person and do not welcome him. But rely upon the Lord, and the Lord will be with you. Take heed and keep your *Nefesh* a lot, lest more than your knowledge can tolerate will come to you from the intellectual abundance. So, you will not receive it and fear its power, but fear only the Lord your God. By seeing its great goodness and its pleasant

brilliance in your heart, conceal your face. After that, return to seek it little by little, and by this you will ascend to it, for the great fire guards the gate”.

At the end of the book, Abulafia praises the Precepts that were given by God. He explains that the World to Come is a state of consciousness that everybody can reach, but a shift in one’s thoughts and perceptions is necessary to reach the eternal life in the Garden of Eden. The *Torah* and the Precepts are meant just for that. Through discipline, we develop the best part of us, attuning with the superior worlds. Then, the light of the Lord is free to flow in us, giving us a renewed life. It is enough that one of us reaches this state, that he can bring with him all the people around about. Ultimately, every kabbalistic study and calculation leads to the Name of God and the twenty-two letters, which are the building blocks of Creation and consciousness. And the letters are nothing but the expression of the Unity of God.

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Fabrizio Lanza