

The Octahedron in the three-dimensional Kabbalah ?

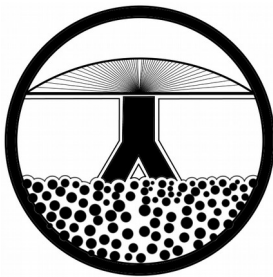
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Abstract: It is found that a double octahedron skeleton perfectly fits the spatial geometry of the Kabbalah. By extension, the octahedron is believed to be one of the basic structural units of the flower of life.

1. Introduction

The tree of life is a fundamental and widespread theme in religious, philosophical and mystical traditions around the world. In general, it symbolizes the cosmic tree that drives and connects all forms of creation. An example of iconic representation of a tree of life is depicted in Fig.1. Jewish mysticism delineates the tree of life with ten interconnected nodes known as Sefirot, making up the Kabbalah.

Figure 1:
Example of tree of life

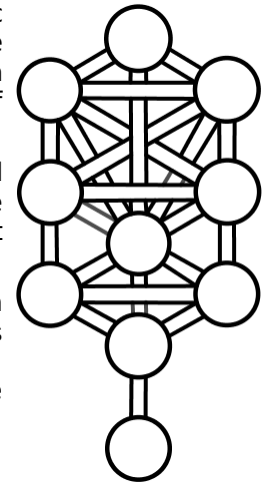


According to Kabbalists, the tree of life is a graphic representation of the process by which the universe came to existence, and it may be found in Genesis ten expressions related to the Sefirot, the divine structure of all being [1].

The Kabbalah and related Merkabah are very sacred symbols, and their secret doctrine was once upon a time exclusive to wise and initiated persons. Legends about the dangers of speculation were not uncommon [2,3].

Since the Renaissance period, the Kabbalah has been adopted as an important symbol in Western non-Jewish culture as well. From its religious origin as an integral part of Judaism, to its later adaptations into Western esotericism, the Kabbalah has gained worldwide interest and its significance has likely universal magnitude.

Figure 2:
The Kabbalah tree of life



2. Three-dimensional Kabbalah

The Kabbalah is mostly known and depicted in its 2-D representation, and as a matter of fact, not much can be found in the common literature about its spatial geometry. However, a 3-D geometry would, as an example, be useful for elucidating the different connections between the Sefirot.

The interconnecting lines linking the Sefirot are thought to be the different paths connecting the various levels of cosmic creations and from this perspective, the presence of selective pathways is legitimate. The Kabbalah can therefore be considered as a network with an integrated spanning tree. Determining the corresponding 3-D spanning tree was one of the objectives of this study.

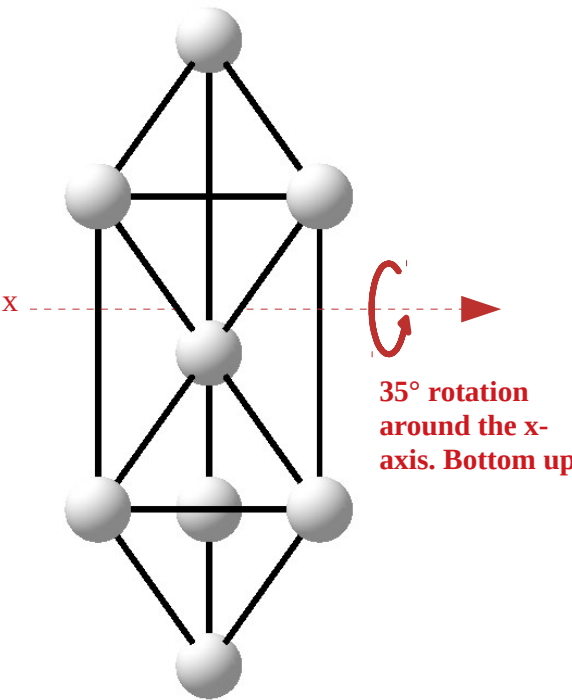
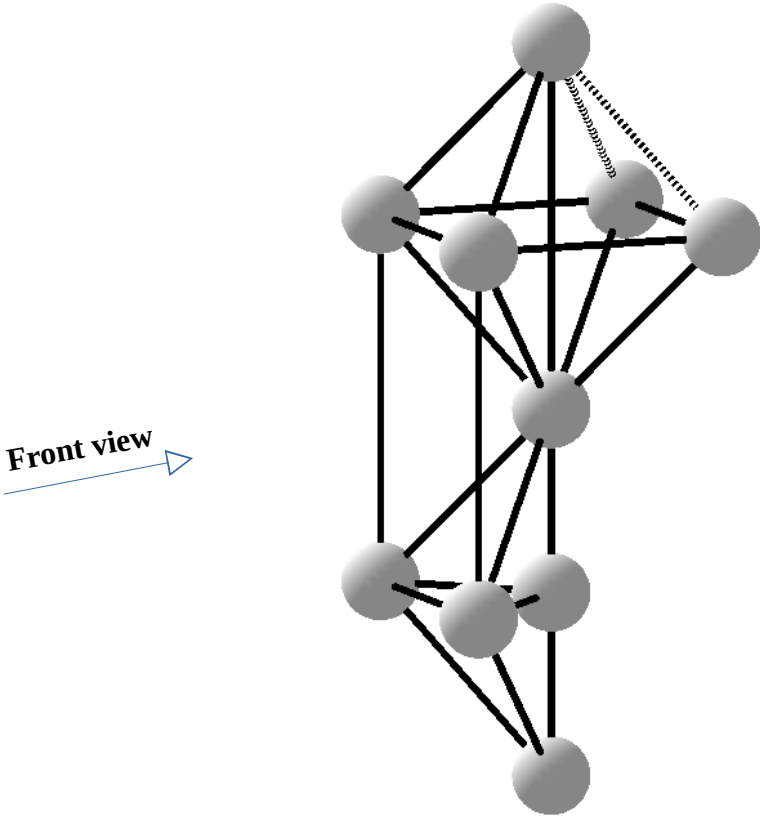
It was found that the octahedron fits particularly well the 3-D Kabbalah. In fact, in order to complete the whole structure, a double octahedron skeleton is required, as shown in Fig.3, although all interconnecting lines are not necessary for drawing the Kabbalah in its common planar form. Fig.3 shows the 3-D structure of the Kabbalah constructed from a double octahedron skeleton. It suggests five "main levels of creation", some Sefirot being co-planar.

3. Two steps: rotation + orthogonal projection

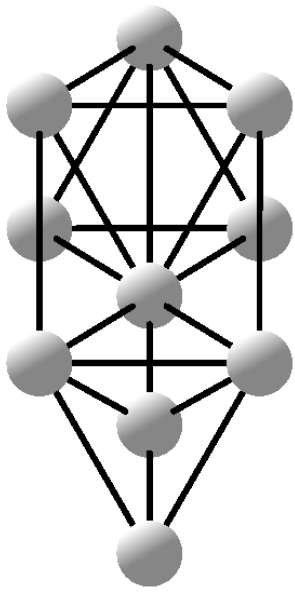
The critical step prior to the orthogonal projection is a 35° rotation around the x-axis, which is carried out by lifting up the lowest sphere of the structure toward the viewer, as depicted in Fig.3. This process leads to the common 2-D representations of the Kabbalah in Fig.3, either with the 2 dotted back lines (3a) or without (3b). The 2 dotted segments in the back top are not systematically present in the common 2-D pictures of the Kabbalah.

The orthogonal projection provides yet another sacred symbol, the hexagram (or six pointed star) which is visible in the top hexagon of Fig. (3a). This symbol is known in Judaism as the "star of David". Therefore the 3-dimensional structure gives rise to 2 important symbols.

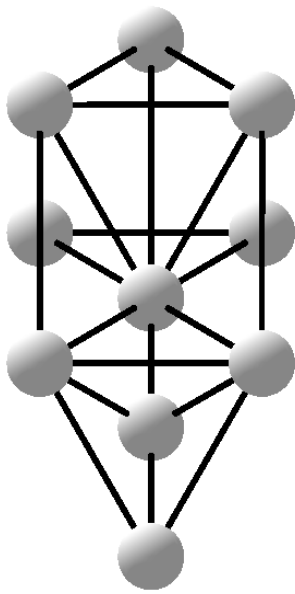
Figure 3: three-dimensional Kabbalah from a double octahedron skeleton



3-D front view



Orthogonal projection (3a)



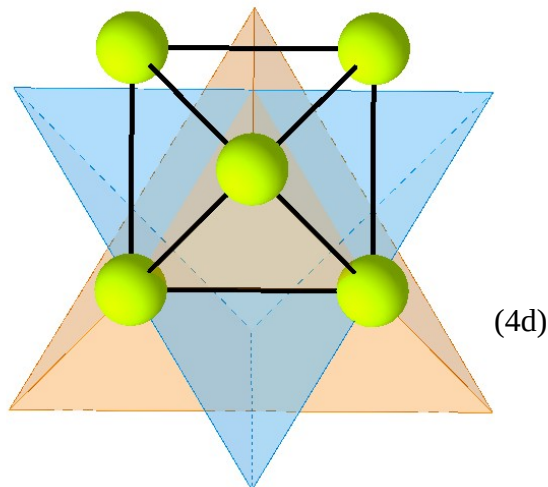
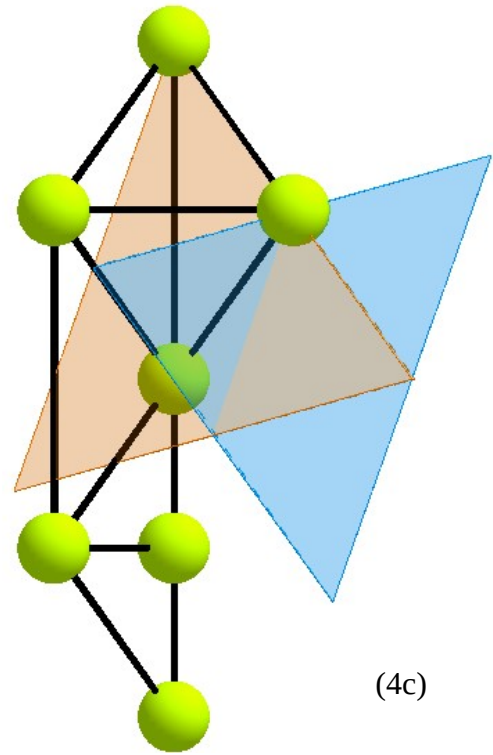
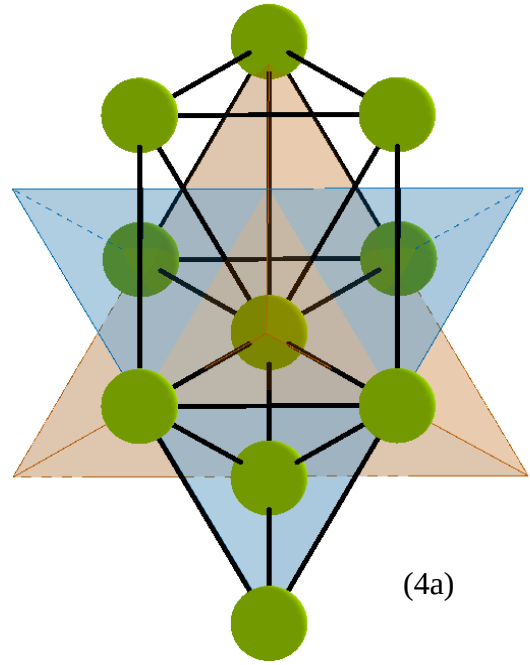
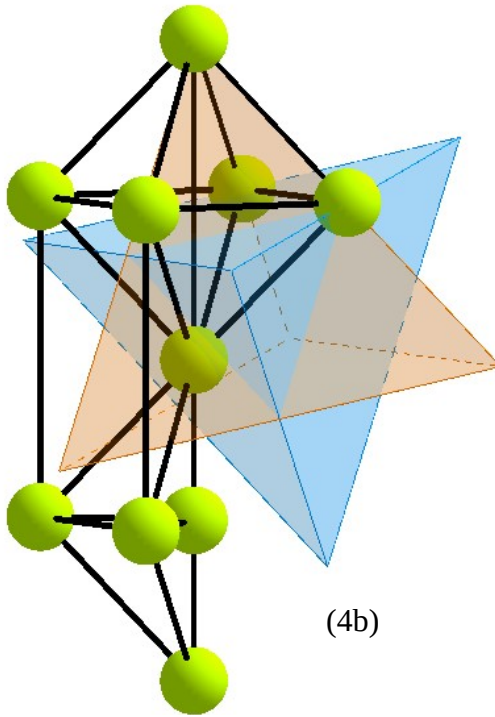
Orthogonal projection (3b)

4. The duality Kabbalah - Merkabah

Kabbalah and Merkabah are often viewed and studied in intimate relation to each other. The Merkabah, which is a stellated octahedron, may easily be fitted to the orthogonal projection of the Kabbalah. However, it's 3-D counterpart requires some degree of patience. It is presented in Fig.4 from different angles and projections.

Figure 4: From 3-D Kabbalah to Merkabah

- (4a): Orthogonal projection
- (4b) and (5c): 3-D views
- (4d): 3-D top view

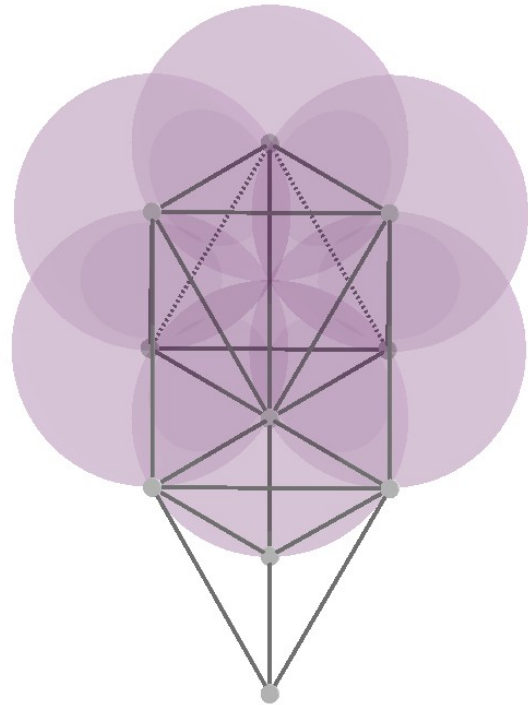


5. Onward to the seed of life

The seed of life can be further constructed from the 3-D structure of the Kabbalah by adding spheres of appropriate radius to the top six nodes.

By extension, the whole flower of life may be constructed, implying the octahedron as one of the basic structure unit for the three-dimensional flower of life.

Figure 5: The seed of life from the 3-D Kabbalah



6. References

- [1] Book, "The Esoteric Codex: Christian Kabbalah", Sarai Kasik, Oct 2015
- [2] Kabbalah, Wikipedia, Online
- [3] Merkabah mysticism, Wikipedia, Online