



# The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity

By Amir D. Aczel

Download now

Read Online ➔

## The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity By Amir D. Aczel

A compelling narrative that blends a story of infinity with the tragic tale of a tormented and brilliant mathematician. From the end of the nineteenth century until his death, one of history's greatest mathematicians languished in an asylum, driven mad by an almost Faustian thirst for universal knowledge. The Mystery Of The Aleph tells the story of Georg Cantor (1845-1918), a Russian born German whose work on the 'continuum problem' would bring us closer than any mathematician before him in helping us to comprehend the nature of infinity. A respected mathematician himself, Dr. Aczel follows Cantor's life and traces the roots of his enigmatic theories. From the Pythagoreans, the Greek cult of mathematics, to the mystical Jewish numerology found in the Kabbalah, The Mystery Of The Aleph follows the search for an answer that may never truly be trusted.

↓ [Download The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbala ...pdf](#)

📄 [Read Online The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabba ...pdf](#)

# The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity

*By Amir D. Aczel*

**The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity** By Amir D. Aczel

A compelling narrative that blends a story of infinity with the tragic tale of a tormented and brilliant mathematician. From the end of the nineteenth century until his death, one of history's greatest mathematicians languished in an asylum, driven mad by an almost Faustian thirst for universal knowledge. The Mystery Of The Aleph tells the story of Georg Cantor (1845-1918), a Russian born German whose work on the 'continuum problem' would bring us closer than any mathematician before him in helping us to comprehend the nature of infinity. A respected mathematician himself, Dr. Aczel follows Cantor's life and traces the roots of his enigmatic theories. From the Pythagoreans, the Greek cult of mathematics, to the mystical Jewish numerology found in the Kabbalah, The Mystery Of The Aleph follows the search for an answer that may never truly be trusted.

**The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity** By Amir D. Aczel  
**Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #396967 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Washington Square Press
- Published on: 2001-09-01
- Released on: 2001-09-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.25" h x .70" w x 5.31" l, .80 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 272 pages

 [Download The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbala ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabba ...pdf](#)

## Download and Read Free Online The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity By Amir D. Aczel

---

### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

The search for infinity, that sublime and barely comprehensible mystery, has exercised both mathematicians and theologians over many generations. Jewish mystics, in particular, labored with elaborate numerological schema to imagine the pure nothingness of infinity, while scientists such as Galileo, the great astronomer, and Georg Cantor, the inventor of modern set theory (as well as a gifted Shakespearean scholar), brought their training to bear on the unimaginable infinitude of numbers and of space, seeking the key to the universe.

In this sometimes technical but always accessible narrative, Amir Aczel, author of the spirited study *Fermat's Last Theorem*, contemplates such matters as the Greek philosopher Zeno's several paradoxes; the curious careers of defrocked priests, (literal) mad scientists, and sober scholars whose work helped untangle some of those paradoxes; and the conundrums that modern mathematics has substituted for the puzzles of yore. To negotiate some of those enigmas requires a belief not unlike faith, Aczel hints, noting, "We may find it hard to believe that an elegant and seemingly very simple system of numbers and operations such as addition and multiplication--elements so intuitive that children learn them in school--should be fraught with holes and logical hurdles." Hard to believe, indeed. Aczel's book makes for a fine and fun exercise in brain-stretching, while providing a learned survey of the regions where science and religion meet. --Gregory McNamee

#### From Publishers Weekly

Aczel's compact and fascinating work of mathematical popularization uses the life and work of the German mathematician Georg Cantor (1845-1918) to describe the history of infinity. Aof human thought about boundlessly large numbers, sequences and sets. Aczel begins with the ancient Greeks, who made infinite series a basis for famous puzzles, and Jewish medieval mystics' system of thought (Kabbalah), which used sophisticated ideas to describe the attributes of the one and infinite God. Moving to 19th-century Germany, mathematician Aczel (*Fermat's Last Theorem*) introduces a cast of supporting characters along with the problems on which they worked. He then brings in Cantor, whose branch of mathAcalled set theoryA"leads invariably to great paradoxes," especially when the sets in question are infinite. Are there as (infinitely) many points on a line as there are inside a square or within a cube? Bizarrely, Cantor discovered, the answer is yes. But (as he also showed) some infinities are bigger than others. To distinguish them, Cantor used the Hebrew letter aleph: the number of whole numbers is aleph-null; the number of irrational numbers, aleph-one. These "transfinite numbers" pose new problems. One, called the continuum hypothesis, vexed Cantor for the rest of his life, through a series of breakdowns and delusions: others who pursued it have also gone mad. This hypothesis turns out to be neither provable, nor disprovable, within the existing foundations of mathematics: Aczel spends his last chapters explaining why. His biographical armatures, his clean prose and his asides about Jewish mysticism keep his book reader friendly. It's a good introduction to an amazing and sometimes baffling set of problems, suited to readers interested in mathAeven, or especially, if they lack training. B&w illustrations not seen by PW. 5-city author tour; \$30,000 ad/promo; 30,000 first printing. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

#### From School Library Journal

Adult/High School-Aczel tells of mathematicians struggling with absolute infinity and some of its mind-bending ramifications. The crown jewel of this struggle was conceived more than a century ago by Georg

Cantor and remains an enigma to mathematicians. Cantor spent his life going back and forth between trying to prove and disprove his continuum hypothesis. In the Kabbalah, the aleph "represents the infinite nature, and the oneness, of God." Cantor deliberately picked this symbol for use in his equations: to him, trying to understand the absolute infinite was like trying to touch the face of God. About 50 years after his death, another mathematician definitively showed that the continuum hypothesis cannot be proven valid or invalid by any known means. Aczel provides a good history leading up to and past Cantor's work. Personal stories of people such as Pythagoras, Galileo, Newton, and G'del are mixed in with well-put explanations of the concepts they pondered. A brief history of the Kabbalah and highlights of some of its concepts help readers understand Cantor's work. The author writes cleanly and clearly on a complex subject, and readers don't have to be good at math to enjoy this book. It's perfect for analytically minded students who love to ponder big questions. Those who enjoyed the popular cosmology books by Stephen Hawking are likely to devour this one as well.

*Sheila Shoup, Fairfax County Public Library, VA*

Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **John Moore:**

The book *The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity* will bring someone to the new experience of reading any book. The author style to spell out the idea is very unique. When you try to find new book to read, this book very ideal to you. The book *The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity* is much recommended to you to read. You can also get the e-book through the official web site, so you can easier to read the book.

#### **Gloria Lockwood:**

Are you kind of active person, only have 10 or even 15 minute in your morning to upgrading your mind ability or thinking skill even analytical thinking? Then you are having problem with the book when compared with can satisfy your small amount of time to read it because this all time you only find reserve that need more time to be examine. *The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity* can be your answer mainly because it can be read by anyone who have those short spare time problems.

#### **Sheila Seim:**

Many people spending their time frame by playing outside together with friends, fun activity using family or just watching TV the whole day. You can have new activity to enjoy your whole day by examining a book. Ugh, you think reading a book will surely hard because you have to accept the book everywhere? It okay you can have the e-book, getting everywhere you want in your Smart phone. Like *The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity* which is keeping the e-book version. So , why not try out this book? Let's find.

**Christopher Jaeger:**

You will get this The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity by visit the bookstore or Mall. Simply viewing or reviewing it could to be your solve issue if you get difficulties to your knowledge. Kinds of this publication are various. Not only through written or printed but in addition can you enjoy this book through e-book. In the modern era including now, you just looking by your local mobile phone and searching what their problem. Right now, choose your own personal ways to get more information about your book. It is most important to arrange yourself to make your knowledge are still up-date. Let's try to choose suitable ways for you.

**Download and Read Online The Mystery of the Aleph:  
Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity By Amir D.  
Aczel #C6GVNL3IY9A**

## **Read The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity By Amir D. Aczel for online ebook**

The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity By Amir D. Aczel Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity By Amir D. Aczel books to read online.

### **Online The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity By Amir D. Aczel ebook PDF download**

**The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity By Amir D. Aczel Doc**

**The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity By Amir D. Aczel Mobipocket**

**The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity By Amir D. Aczel EPub**

**C6GVNL3IY9A: The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity By Amir D. Aczel**