

**Zine Final Reflection Paper**

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AT/CN 660-2: Professional Ethics in Art Therapy/Counseling

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## **Zine Final Reflection Paper**

Over the course of our seven-week zine project, I explored various ethical prompts through art therapy integration. Following the traditional zine format, I folded a piece of eighteen-by-twenty-four-inch Strathmore drawing paper into eight pages, forming a nice booklet. Using pen and ink, I created geometric imagery on each page that represented my concept of ethics, values, informed consent, boundaries, cultural humility, ethical dilemmas, and my current ethical orientation.

After completing my zine, I was surprised to discover a connection between my geometry and Metatron's Cube, which is named after the Archangel Metatron and has ties to the Jewish mystical Kabbalah. As I drew each weekly image, I imagined tapping into my higher self and channeling answers from a place beyond my conscious wisdom mind. Upon further reflection, I realized that Metatron may have been helping me through this process as a mediator between myself and HaShem. Thus, each of my zine's seven works is titled "Metatron", along with its corresponding ethical prompt. In becoming an ethical professional who will be responsible for clients' lives, I intend to lean on this higher self as a means to avoid temptation and make the best decisions possible. While all seven of my drawings taught me valuable lessons, I will focus on my three most significant pieces for the sake of efficiency: 1) "Metatron I: Ethical Compass", 2) "Metatron II: Wisdom, Temperance, & Justice", and 3) "Metatron VII: Higher Self".

My ethical journey began with "Metatron I: Ethical Compass", where the arrow of my ethical compass orbits within a complex social space. This social space is symbolized by a three-dimensional cube, which expresses the metaphor of multiple perspectives. In the middle of the cube, the arrow of truth points downward, reversing a pyramidal social hierarchy to benefit a

greater majority. The concept behind this compass was to illustrate how power is both located and negotiated within systems theory as a means of determining an equitable path through the ethical decision-making process. For me, this means balancing the therapist's and client's needs within society as a whole. To repair the wounds of inequity imposed by an unfair society, therapists must make a reasonable effort to support their marginalized clients, while also taking care to protect their own needs and liability.

The following week, I arrived at "Metatron II: Wisdom, Temperance, & Justice", which frames three values I aspire to hold high as part of my ethical practice. Envisioning this piece, I felt myself relying on my Jewish identity to reveal relevant truths. Line by line, Kabbalistic imagery emerged in the form of hexagonal fractals that wove together three distinct Stars of David, each inscribed with the Hebrew words for wisdom, temperance, and justice. Drawing this piece felt like watching a Rubik's Cube sliding into a Metatron formation to reveal cryptic commandments: wisdom, to provide insight on difficult matters; temperance, to remain disciplined and avoid temptation; and justice, to maintain empathy and fair-mindedness. Once completed, I noticed how the "T" and two triangles within the hexagonal framework resembled a balanced scale. This reminded me of the need to balance my values so that one of them never becomes overbearing and causes me to lose sight of the others.

As my values guided me to week eight, I began to ponder where I had arrived with my ethical decision-making. After exploring the complex and nuanced aspects of informed consent, boundaries, cultural humility, and ethical dilemmas, I began to feel much less sure of myself. While I had learned to locate the highest authorities and follow their ethical codes, I also realized that I had a responsibility to serve clients with an awareness of systemic concerns. This

broadening of my awareness created room for ethical gray areas with more holistic approaches, but it also caused me to feel a sense of great overwhelm. I certainly want to challenge the harmful status quo that upholds inequitable systems for my clients, but I also feel limited by wanting to work one-on-one in private practice and earn a decent income.

As darkness began clouding my self-concept, I thought back to when individual therapy saved my life as a client and remembered how I aspire to be that support for others. In response to this moment of clarity, I drew “Metatron VII: Higher Self”, which is a depiction of my inner light revealing an ethical path forward, despite feeling broken and lost in the dark. Yes, I may just be preventing the casualties of drowning clients flowing downstream from systemic societal problems, but I know from personal experience that those therapeutic lifelines can still save lives. Ultimately, I permit myself to practice art therapy in an emotionally and financially sustainable way that also helps clients access holistic healing. Additionally, I feel that addressing the systemic concerns of other marginalized clients as a queer Jewish woman could be considered a form of social justice work.

Personally, I loved sharing the zine project in class and being part of a group effort to discover and integrate ethical truths. Sharing our zines felt very comforting because I realized that I was not alone in my uncertainty and overwhelm. Further, seeing the ways others uniquely addressed our weekly ethical prompts was enlightening, because I was able to learn multiple valid approaches to the same concern. We are all in this together and I know moving forward that I will reach out to professional colleagues for help whenever I encounter ethical dilemmas in my practice. Collaborating on our shared class zine was delightful because it allowed us to resource our greatest insights from one another and take home a work of art. Having a physical



copy of our shared zine provided me with a keepsake that I can refer back to whenever I need to be reminded of our collective challenge to be ethical practitioners.

In my private therapy practice, I may apply zine-making as a directive for clients to process their journeys through longer-term challenges. The act of folding a booklet and filling its pages over time is a commitment to working through complex subjects that do not have one definitive answer. Being able to progress through the pages of a zine and see the evolution of one's psychology is a way to understand and learn from adaptation. For example, if a client were going through an experience like grief that involved several stages of emotional processing, then a zine might be a great way to work through each of the stages as they arise in real-time. Our shared class zine was a testament to the value of zine-making within group contexts, as it allowed us students to engage in individual processing with opportunities for communal relating and integration. For these reasons, I would include zines in my toolkit if I ever facilitated groups.

## **Ethics Zine Artwork Images**

Zoë N. Shulman

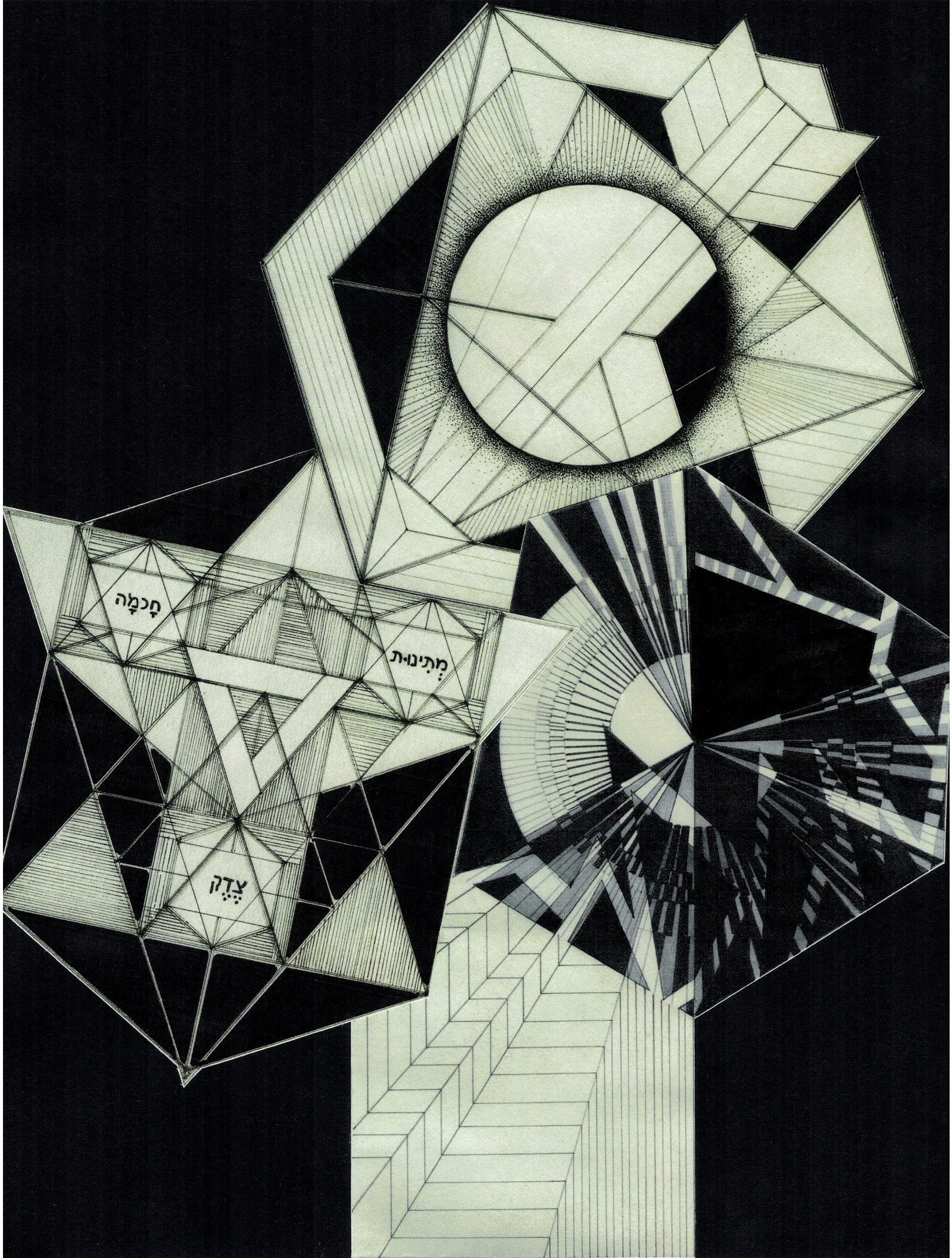
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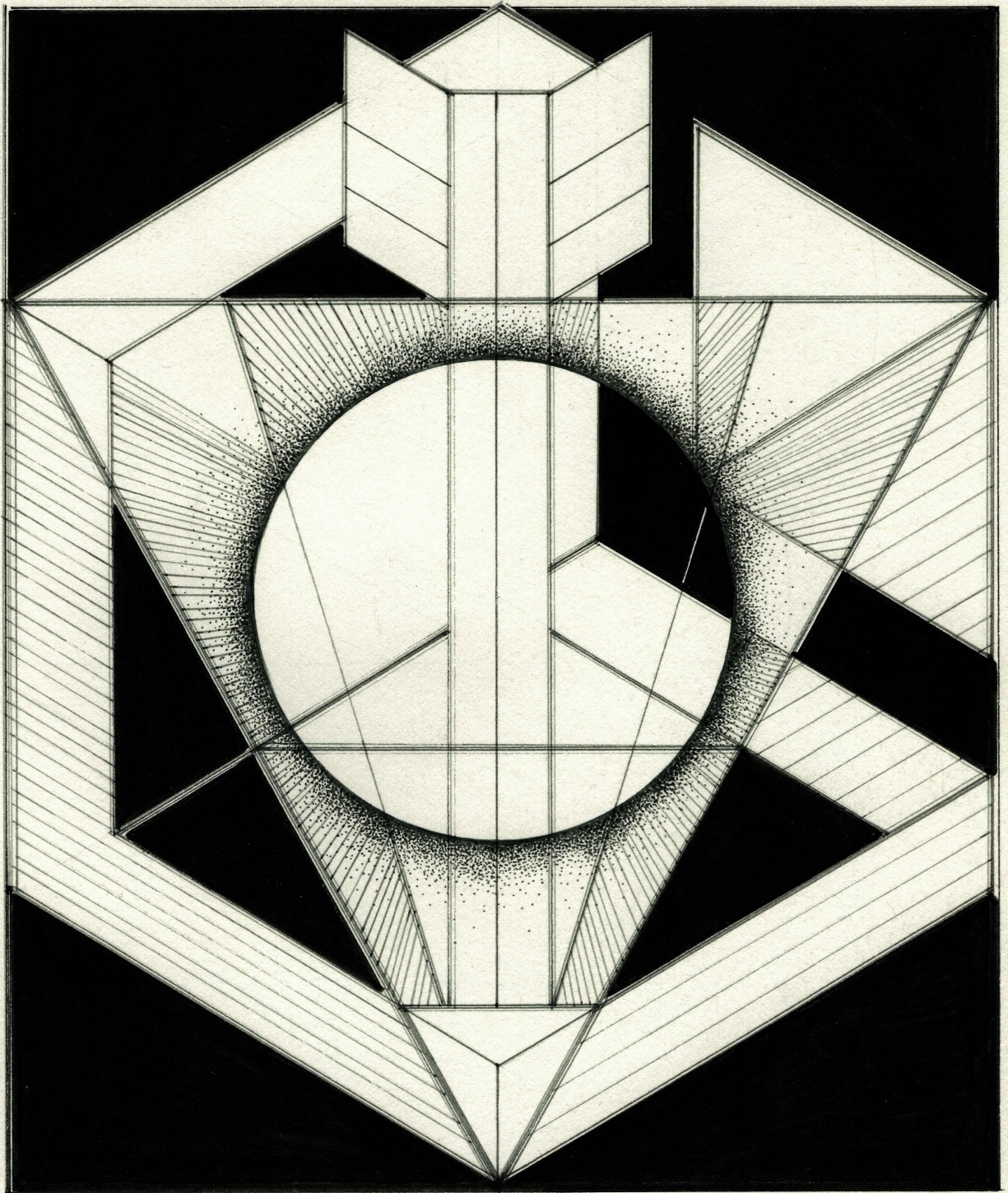


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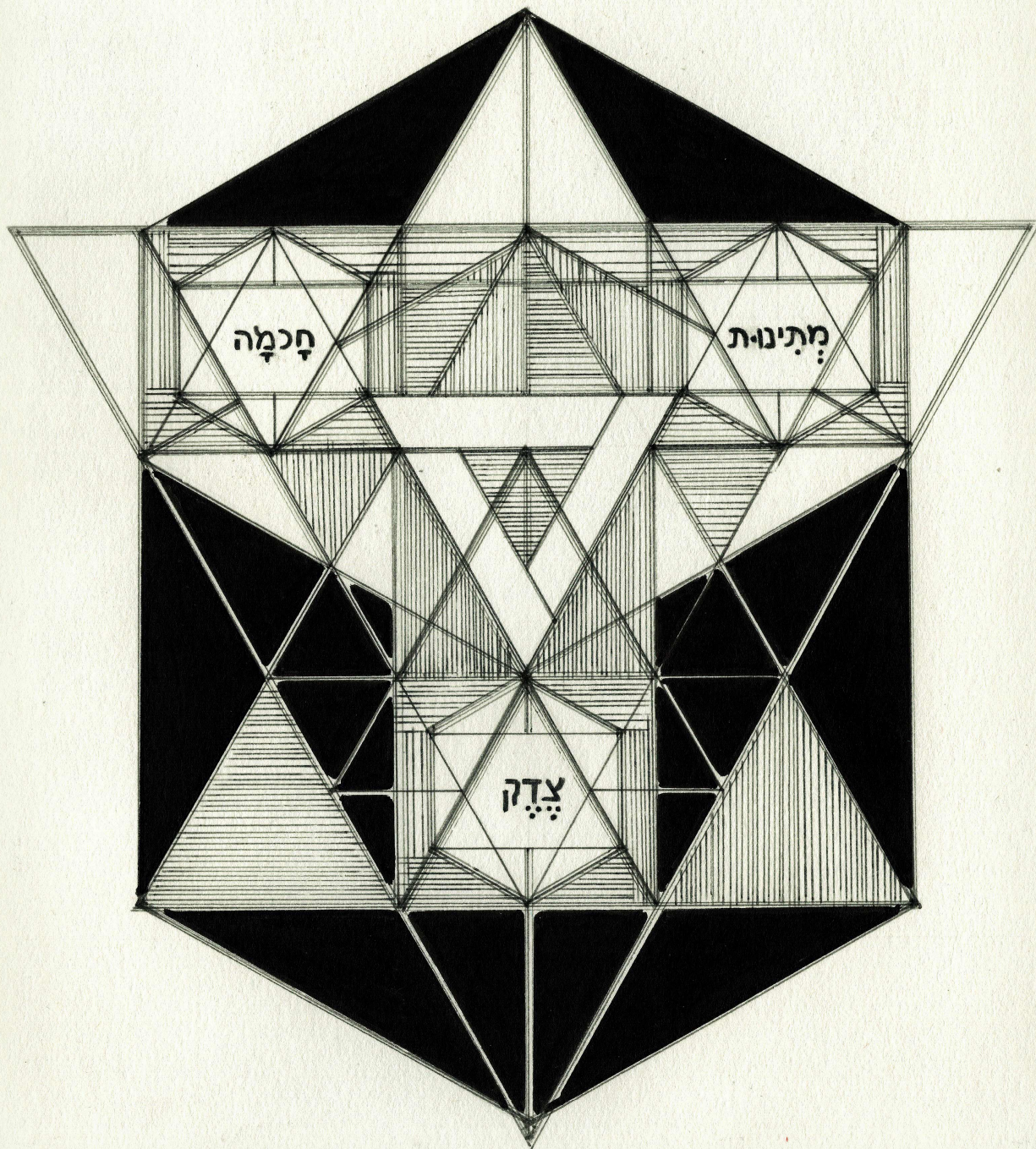
מתינות

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