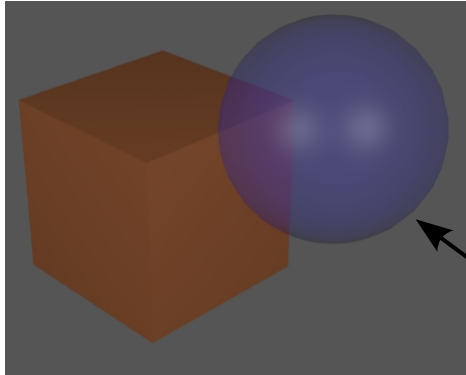


## Chapter 4- Materials and Textures

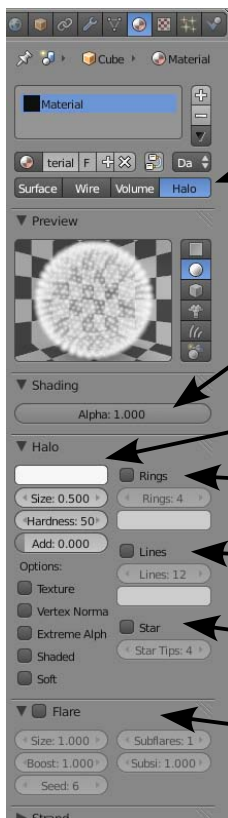
### Transparency Using Z-Transparency:

The easiest way to make something transparent in Blender while still maintaining a fast render speed is to use the **Z-Transparency** feature and controlling the **Alpha** setting. In the *Material* panel, turn on *Transparency* and select *Z-Transparency*, then slide the **Alpha** control down. Press the F12 button to render an image. If you need features like distortion (refraction), then you will need to use **Raytrace Transparent**. Refraction is the effect you get like looking through a magnifying glass or a crystal. Avoid using Ray features at this time. They are discussed in a later chapter.



### Halo Settings

By using Halos on objects, you are basically only making the vertices visible when rendered. Halo effects give you a star-like image on every vertex. **Sometimes, it adds a nice effect to take a plane and delete all vertices except for one.** This one vertex can be used like a shooting star or a "Tinkerbell" effect in an animation. Tie it to a particle effect (discussed in a later chapter) and you can produce some interesting results. When you press the "**Halo**" button in the material panel, here are your options:



Turn ON Halo

Halo Transparency

Halo Color and Hardness

Check to add rings, count and color

Check to add lines, count and color

Check to add stars and tips

Flare adds additional rings and effects



Halos can also be animated to give a variety of effects. Animation basics are discussed in a later chapter. There are also other options with halos not discussed. Halos are also used to control the size and appearance of particles in smoke and fire effects. These will also be discussed in a later chapter. Feel free to experiment!