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INNOVATORY CONSERVATISM IN ULTRA-ORTHODOX TYPOGRAPHY IN ISRAEL

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The purpose of the article is to explore the differences in perceptions and approaches to typographic design among the various communities that make up Haredi society. In general, the shape of the letter will be affected by the division between religious and non-religious genres, as well as by the intra-Haredi social division between “Hasidim” and “Lithuanians”, the two dominant groups that make up the Haredi society, whose lifestyles differ in several areas. The proposed article is an additional tier to previous studies and investigates the Hebrew letter and its role in the world of journalism as conveying a message in the social-educational-ideological context, even without referring to what is actually written. The study reveals and deciphers the power struggles and relations that exist in the ultra-Orthodox world through the images and through the mechanisms activated through them and their results, as part of the visual culture. The research methodology is based on the integrated use of general scientific methods: analytical, systematic, historical, and comparative. Conclusions. The daily and weekly Haredi press is considered as something that “under the circumstances” is needed and yet is a major player in the Haredi visual world. The Ashkenazi Haredi press is divided into defined sectors. The newspapers of the Hassidic communities preserve a long-standing typographic, advertising, intra-community tradition, based on the design style of Jewish newspapers from early twentieth-century Europe. The newspapers of the Lithuanian communities reflect the character of the public who read them, who are more modern in their lifestyle. Even though there is strict control over the content, these newspapers reflect modernism in their typographic layout and letter style selection. The newspapers in both groups undergo strict editing in both content and form, and their respective rabbinical councils work hard to adapt them to their respective readership. The choice of letter, colour, and composition are borrowed, among other things, from the world of clothing, which has many rules, and reflects what is happening within the community. The differences between the Hasidic and Lithuanian groups are evident in their attitude to the visual elements in the various types of printing and advertising. The Haredi public are proficient readers and are aware of the subtleties of the shape and size of the letter from an early age. Therefore, the letter serves both as content and form, and its use in the visual world is varied. In addition to being a tool for content, the letter will be used for an image,

a Hebrew date, gematria and to create an atmosphere of sacred or secular, depending on the typographic choice.

Keywords: Haredi press; letter; typographic; typeface; newspapers; Israel

Introduction

The Hebrew letter is a communication medium that operates in the interface between form and content. The changes that have taken place over the years reflect the social, cultural, and religious history of Israel, and one can find in the Hebrew letter affiliations with different ideologies. A look at the press, its advertisements and design over the years reveals that it is possible to identify connections and affiliations to historical chapters that have certain characteristics which have changed when new chapters began.

This article deals with the Hebrew typeface from the 1990s and its appearances in the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) Ashkenazi press in Israel. Haredi Judaism as an isolated and distinctive culture (Sivan, 1991), upholds Jewish law in all its details (“Haredi” means fearful, i.e., fearful of God’s wrath) and is characterised by absolute subordination to Torah authority, communal isolation, adherence to community institutions, adoption of a conservative worldview and a distinct external appearance. The ultra-Orthodox society preserves a “sacred space”, which is reserved for Torah learners, in its separation of everything that is reminiscent of the secular world, the “outside” world.

Purpose of the article

Design elements in Haredi society are characterised by conservatism and restraint. Over the years, this conservatism has been the solid foundation for the visual separation between the ultra-Orthodox and the secular. Separation from secular society means walking in the ways of the ultra-Orthodox and avoiding the adoption of customs that are considered secular. This article will explore the differences in perceptions and approaches to typographic design among the various communities that make up Haredi society. In general, the shape of the letter will be affected by the division between religious and non-religious genres, as well as by the intra-Haredi social division between “Hasidim” and “Lithuanians”, the two dominant groups that make up the Haredi society, whose lifestyles differ in several areas. Hasidism, which arose in the second half of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, against a background of religious ignorance, dire economic circumstances, and poor morale among the Jews of Eastern Europe, saw as a supreme value the closeness of the Jews to a happy and simple Judaism that does not require great scholarship (Alfasi, 1961). The movement was headed by the “Baal Shem Tov” from Mezhibozh, Ukraine. The Hassidic society has its own graphic language, made up of symbols designed in the spirit of the European Art Nouveau of previous centuries, which convey a message of glory, rule and power, and this echoes the birthplace of the Hasidic movement.

The Lithuanian ultra-Orthodox continue the scholarly, striving for excellence lifestyle that was crystallised by the “Vilna Gaon”¹ in nineteenth-century Lithuania, hence their name (Baron, 2017, p. 83). The ideal Lithuanian Jew, lived a life of uncompromising scholarship and halakhic rigidity (Baron, 2017, p. 83). Currently, the “Lithuanian” sub-group constitutes the largest sector among the ultra-Orthodox (Pfeffer, 2016). The lifestyle of the Lithuanian ultra-Orthodox is more open and modern.

While the Hasidim are required to preserve the old ways and to differentiate themselves in their dress and language from the society around them, the Lithuanians try to find language elements that will suit both the tradition and the spirit of the time, as evidenced by the various manifestations of the Hebrew letter respectively.

The ultra-Orthodox Lithuanian society avoids having a formalism and a unique style. In general, its approach is toward modernity when it comes to visual language and typography.

Main research material

Haredi Newspapers

Haredi newspapers have existed since the end of the nineteenth century, in Europe and in Israel (Kliger, n.d.). Despite the Haredi perception that these newspapers are the right thing to have “under the circumstances” (Friedman, 1992–1993), the printed Haredi newspaper is the main legitimate Haredi media, and there are several reasons for this:

A. The newspaper is halakhically supervised.²

B. The newspaper supplies expansive instructive and educational content to help fill the leisure hours.

C. The newspaper serves as a social tool, and reports on the happenings inside the Haredi world in ultra-Orthodox communities in Israel and around the world, and also what is happening in the “outside” world (Zicherman, 2014, p. 250).

Each faction in the Haredi sector has its own newspaper, written and designed according to its Judaic approach and according to a specific committee, and/or a group of rabbis who determine its content and design (Zicherman, 2014, p. 250). The main division between the newspapers is between those intended for Hasidim and those intended for the Lithuanians. There are also newspapers aimed at readers from the Sephardic (Jews who came from the Balkans, Middle East, and North Africa) Haredi community.³ This division is also evident in the shape of the letter chosen to represent the newspaper.

Creating a dedicated newspaper, with unique graphic and typographic characteristics, is like building a distinct space that protects the values of a society and its culture. This distinctive space is an alternative means of communication to the media of the

¹ Rabbi Eliyahu ben Shlomo Kramer, the head of Lithuanian Jewry in Vilnius.

² Dudi Zilbershlag, a Haredi publicist and the publisher of the *BaKehilla* newspaper, testified that newspapers that came out over the years without the supervision of a rabbinical committee suffered from problems in distributing the newspaper to the point of being removed from the newsstands. Only when a “supervisor” was appointed, who went over every word in the newspaper, were the objections to its distribution stopped.

³ There are also subdivisions to newspapers for women and children in each of the mentioned sectors.

secular majority and serves as a means of community communication, which is by its broad definition, a means of communication produced by a minority group to create community identity and solidarity. This communication is distributed for the group by its creators who have a sense of responsibility to the community and those who control the community knowledge and traditions, and this is represented through the stories found therein (Gross, 1998; Ginsburg, 1994, p. 365, pp. 371–373; Fairchild, 2010).

There are currently four Haredi daily newspapers: *HaModia* (established: 1949), *Yated Ne’eman* (1985), *Hamevaser* (2009) and *Hapeles* (2012). There are also several weekly magazines, some of which try to fill the large void left behind by the groundbreaking Haredi weekly *Friday*, which closed in the late 1990s, and add to that at least 100 freely distributed weekly and monthly magazines together with large amounts of various media distributed in Haredi city centres and neighbourhoods.

Much has been written about the non-Haredi general press. However, Kimi Kaplan (2006, p. 5) notes that despite the fact that in the last generation there has been a flourishing of the Haredi press, and that there are many and varied media, and this media is the most influential means of public opinion in the Haredi sector (Levi, 1965; Michelson, 1998), there is scant research about it. The research of Kimi Kaplan, Rivka Neria Ben Shachar (2011), Menachem Friedman (1991), and others, is fundamentally historical and rarely touches on matters of design and the typographical choices of the Haredi press. I, therefore, relied on a study by Dafna Zak-Teller (2003) on advertisements in the ultra-Orthodox press. Dana Yaari (2005) investigated the Frank-Riehl font phenomenon, as a characteristic of the general press in Israel. The various roles of the Hebrew letter in the Haredi press are discussed in studies by Alik Mishori (2006), Gideon Ofrat (2015), and Avi Eisenstein (1986, 2010).

The typography changes over time. New fonts are created while other fonts are shelved for many years or disappear due to various reasons. The pages of the newspapers provide examples that show what is happening in the printing design arena.

The proposed article is an additional tier to previous studies and investigates the Hebrew letter and its role in the world of journalism as conveying a message in the social-educational-ideological context, even without referring to what is actually written. The study reveals and deciphers the power struggles and relations that exist in the ultra-Orthodox world through the images and through the mechanisms activated through them and their results, as part of the visual culture.

The typography in the Ashkenazi Haredi newspapers

The ultra-Orthodox society is not monolithic and is divided into factions with different ideologies, Ashkenazi Hasidim and Lithuanians, and Sephardi Haredi members,⁴ and each faction has many sub-groups.

⁴ Another group of Haredi Jews in addition to the Lithuanians and Hassidim, who are Ashkenazis, is the group of Haredi Jews from the “Eastern” countries, i.e., from the Middle East, Balkans and North Africa, collectively called “Sephardim.” The first Sephardic Haredi community formed as a group only in the 1980s. They constitute about 30% of the entire Haredi population and do not belong to it ideologically. Their way of life combines openness with preservation of tradition and it is difficult to characterise them in terms of dress or occupation. Some of them are more inclined to be a part of the Lithuanian Haredi faction (Shas), and others belong to the Chabad and Breslau Hasidic sects, and some do not belong to any group. The *HaModia* newspaper does not employ any Sephardi journalists, and there is almost no reference, neither in the content of the articles nor in the ads, to the affairs of the Haredi Sephardic community other than politics and in mentioning the death of leading rabbis. In this article, I will not address this group.

The differences between them are evident, among other things, in their ways of life, regarding their reverence to learning, in their customs, in how they educate their children, in the manner of dress, and also in the typography.

A look at the four dailies affiliated with the ultra-Orthodox society, the *HaModia* and *HaMevaser* newspapers, which belong to the Hassidic faction, the Lithuanian faction's *Yated Ne'eman* and *Hapeles* newspapers, show the ideological difference between the groups, reflected in the newspapers' appearance in general and particularly, in their typography.

HaModia

The *HaModia* newspaper, which has been the main Haredi daily newspaper in Israel for several decades since its appearance in September 1950, is a pioneer of the daily newspapers in the ultra-Orthodox sector, and the oldest of them (Levi, 1988, pp. 244–245; Levi, 1997). The *HaModia* was founded in Europe in 1910 by the then president of the World Agudat Israel Association, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Levin. The newspaper aimed to resurrect the spiritual treasures lost in the Holocaust and to be the mouthpiece of the entire ultra-Orthodox public (Levi, 1988, p. 244). Levin, who was characterised by his conservative views, opposed budgeting Zionist organisations and was against encouraging feminist ideas in the public sphere. He based his views on the traditional view that life in the Land of Israel has religious-spiritual values, with Torah study and prayer being the central issues.

The people of the old settlement in Jerusalem did not speak Hebrew in their daily conduct (Be'er, 2003). Hebrew was the “sacred language” and was used for prayer and Torah study (Groveis, 2019). The use of the Hebrew letter for daily and non-religious purposes was not acceptable.⁵

In light of all this, it is clear that the use of the Hebrew letter in the *HaModia* newspaper, had to prove to its readers at the time that it did not disparage the holy language and make it into something mundane and even unclean, but a continuation of holiness, of public education for a life of Torah study, strengthening family values and steering clear of gossip.

Initially, the *HaModia* was started as an alternative to the secular press.⁶ The concept that accompanied the establishment of the newspaper was that it was established “under the circumstances” as a desire to keep the readership within the content and visual world of the Haredi society, and therefore it was very important to preserve its special character.

The *HaModia* newspaper, like the other ultra-Orthodox newspapers, is a tool in the hands of those who run it. Its main purpose is to influence reality and not necessarily to report it (Kaplan, 2006, pp. 17–18). “The “Haredi street” has two truths for everything. One truth is about life as it is, and a second truth is about life as it should be. The ideal is to take from the Western way of life only what is appropriate for ultra-Orthodox life and ignore everything else” (Levi, 1988, p. 16).

⁵ A story told to me by my grandmother, Mrs. Ziporah Meisels OBM, who was a descendent of one of the leaders of the “Old Yishuv”, was that even though in other households they used pieces of newspaper to wipe their hands when needed... In her house this type of use of Hebrew newspapers was strictly forbidden. The Hebrew letters that were printed on the paper had an inherent level of sanctity regardless of what the words actually said.

⁶ “Since the public needs it so that they will not go to “other fields” to gather there and in that way have less belief and fear of God”

The *HaModia* newspaper, which belongs to the Hassidic faction, is characterised by great modesty and conservatism, which is reflected in the choice of articles and ads, and in the graphic and typographic design. Readers' education as a value supersedes the newspaper's economic values, and thus, for example, the newspaper would prefer to forego a large advertising campaign and not to "corrupt" its readers with ideas and/or noneducational designs (Weisberg, 2014).

The newspaper's target audience includes all age groups in the ultra-Orthodox sector, men, women, youth and children from the Hassidic faction of the Haredi sector and especially the "Gur" Hasidim. Their readership includes people from all social and economic strata.



Figure 1. The logo of the *HaModia* newspaper, from the 1950's till today. Photo by E. Grossman.

One of the basic assumptions in newspaper typography is that the letter plays an important role in the ideology that the newspaper wants to convey to the readership (Childers & Jass, 2002; Henderson et al., 2004; Tantillo et al., 1995). A historical look at the newspaper's logo⁷ indicates that its connection to the design of newspapers in Poland at the beginning of the century is much greater than that of the Israeli press of the 1940s when the newspaper was published in Israel. While the symbols of the newspapers of the 1940s in the country express power, patriotism, and standing, as befits the Zionist messages of those years, the symbols of European newspapers are designed in a picturesque style.

The awakening of Jewish consciousness in Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century led to the establishment of Jewish movements and organisations that chose names for themselves and published newspapers that would spread their ideas. The Jugendstil⁸ movement brought with it the proclamation of the new world and was perceived as an appropriate way to express primacy, a new beginning, and youthfulness. The main characteristics of the style were the use of great decoration and elements from the flora and fauna and an emphasis on natural and rounded lines. It flooded Europe in all areas of design, art, illustration and furniture, deviating from the narrow realm of art (Zalmonah, 2007). This style also gave its signs in the symbols of the Hebrew newspapers from that period (Ofrat, 2015) (for example, the symbols of the *Haynt* and *Mizrachi* newspapers). No more were rigid typographical letter used, such as the black

⁷ A logo is a symbol of an institution or of a commercial enterprise, which appears in the publications of the institution or on the company's products. The logo has a fixed graphic design, and usually includes the name of the institution or company or the initials of the name.

⁸ Youth style or in German, Jugendstil is also called *Ars Nuovo* or *Modern Style*

Gothic (Pludwinski, 2008). German letter that symbolised nationalism and its institutions (Barzilai, 2018). Instead, soft, decorative, and organic lines that radiate harmony were used that were a counterreaction to conservative typography. The “Frank-Riehl” font, which is used as a “running reporter” for the entire newspaper, is also made up of the square Hebrew letter combined with the principles of the Jugendstil.

The logo of the *HaModia* newspaper from its inception to the present day is designed according to the principles of the Jugendstil, without adopting the social and ideological changes that were reflected in that type of typographic design, which were the inspiration for Hebrew newspaper symbols in the first half of the twentieth century.

Preserving the typography of the emblem from that period in such a way that the signal was designed manually, without changing it according to the spirit of the time and the technology available to us today, indicates adherence to tradition, affinity for town life in Europe (Levi, 1988) and the aversion of the target audience to technological advancements that can upset “the old world”.⁹

Logos, emblems, or trademarks are not created naturally but are constructed intentionally. “A logo should have the ability to take an abstract idea and translate it into visual language with minimal means and give it a communicative dimension” (Donner, 1999). The logo as an image represents the ideology of the body to which it belongs, not its meaning and its objective relation to reality, but its longed-for meaning.

The *HaModia* newspaper, as the representative of the Agudat Israel party, whose adherence to tradition and not adopting the new and innovative are one of its basic principles (Stern, 2004, p. 80), is characterized by its unique symbol. Although the verbal dimension is the main core of the newspaper, it is the visual dimension, which is expressed in the decorated symbol reminiscent of a dripping candle (see Figure 1), having the effect of constructing the sensory experience and the newspaper’s atmosphere. In the Jewish world, the candle and its flame have both functional and symbolic roles. Choosing the image of the candle reinforces the motif of separation from darkness, evil, and negativity, and yet there is also the motif of choosing good, pure, and illuminating. In addition, the leaders of the Haredi society and their followers in the *HaModia* newspaper consider their way to be the “pure” way (Stern, 2004, p. 81). They are the guards of the embers, of the last jug of pure oil (Baron, 2017, p. 26; Elyashiv, 2011) and thus guard the Jewish past. This idea deserves to be reflected in the visuals as well. By choosing the old design, which has already ceased to be fashionable (Zilberberg, 1968, p. 84), they call for the preservation of memory and tradition, thereby representing the content world of their readers.

The choice of candle image serves as a connection to the reader’s basic world of concepts. The colour black is directly connected to modesty and conservatism, and in general to the Haredi male colour and fashion, the main readership of the newspaper.

The use of letter with vowels in the logo makes the reading simple and clear to all, yet nevertheless corresponds with the sacred world whose letters have vowels.

Although the ornamentation is a historical product of the period when the logo was first designed, it helps strengthen the logo’s status as something connected to the world of holiness, which in Jewish culture these ornaments are seen as those that do not belong to the secular world.

⁹ Evidence of this can be found in the core issues of the newspaper and its non-coverage of technological advances and developments.

Designing letters for the sacred and the profane

The question of whether it is permissible to read newspapers on Shabbat appeared as early as the eighteenth century, in a responsa by Rabbi Yaakov Emden called “She’ei-lot Yaavetz” (Questions of Yaavetz). According to Jewish law, secular material should not be read on Shabbat.¹⁰ Rabbi Emden ruled that newspapers can be read on the Sabbath, but not the parts that deal with every day and business matters (Emdin, 2003). Ever since, there is a separation between the news and advertising pages and between the pages allowed to be read on Shabbat, whose content is essentially Torah.

The pages of the *HaModia* newspaper for weekdays have outer pages and inner pages. The outer pages, which wrap around the inner ones, are designed in a large format (Broadsheet) as was customary in the past, as part of its conservative worldview and to avoid the “tabloid” image that has clung to small format newspapers. The rabbis argued that the traditional format was important and forbade it to be changed (Shachar, 2005, p. 3).

The attention given to the relationship between the subject and the graphic and typographic reference it receives, teaches about the newspaper’s readership’s state of mind. In the Haredi newspapers, a really big headline will appear in the newspaper only in exceptional cases, such as the death of an important rebbe, a huge demonstration on a religious issue, etc., and not as an everyday thing. The competitors (Lithuanians) changed their attitude and adapted more to the secular, more innovative press.

The *HaModia* newspaper has a weekly Torah supplement (which will never be called a “Mussaf” (supplement in Hebrew), as it is commonly called in the secular press, because “Mussaf” is the name of a prayer). The purpose of this supplement is to create a newspaper for the Sabbath and holidays, in which most of the topics relate to Judaism and Hasidism. The Torah supplement deals with the coverage of Jewish communities that were destroyed, lessons from the Torah portion read in the synagogue and various innovative Torah-related topics. Reading the supplement is the closest thing to reading a textbook that is read cover to cover on Shabbat, hence the paper’s design: an old and elegant style design, reminiscent of the design of holy books with monochromatic colours, mainly white, beige, and brown, and sometimes decorated with gold.

The date that appears on the pages is the Hebrew calendar date, without the Gregorian one (as it appears on the main pages). The pages are numbered using gematria letters, similar to the holy books (e.g., Chumash, Mishnah, and Talmud) and all page titles are the same size without a typographic hierarchy.

The fonts that appear in the Torah supplement are divided into “running text”, which is used in all newspaper articles and is in plain and bold “Frank-Riehl”, and larger text sizes used for the various headings, designed in different fonts. All the fonts used are similar to those used in the Chumash and in the Siddurim, conveying a sense of dignity and above all, are identified by the readership as letters used for matters of holiness.

The compositions are straightforward, and many of the columns are in bold and/or enlarged text boxes. The Torah supplement does not contain innovative language refinements and typographic designs.

¹⁰ Secular material is called “deeds of commoners” in Halachic jargon.

The most notable change that indicates that this is a Torah newspaper is the addition of the three small lines above the letter Yod in the newspaper's symbol, which exists only in Torah scrolls, tefillin and mezuzahs.



Figure 2. The front page and the Logo of the Torah Supplement of the *HaModia* newspaper.
Photo by E. Grossman.

The English version of *HaModia* in the US has the Torah supplement printed in Hebrew only and is added to the regular English newspaper on Fridays.

HaMevaser

HaMevaser was first published in 2009 as a competitor to *HaModia* for the Hassidic readership, even though their worldview is very similar (Ben-Haim, 2008).



Figure 3. The logo of the *HaMevaser* newspaper
(The Herald (Daily), 2022).

The logo of the *HaMevaser* newspaper (Figure 3) uses the “Drugulin” font and is narrowed and decorated in the middle of the letter. The font is similar to the letters of scripture (Stern, 2004, p. 15; Yardeni, 2002, p. 104), which are characterised by round lines and serifs and are punctuated like them. The letters are supplemented with small dots or rhombuses in the middle of the letter, reminiscent of an ornamental style that originated in thirteenth century Ashkenaz and was common until the 1930s.

Although this newspaper was published about six decades after the start of the *HaModi'a* newspaper, the design similarity between the pages of the two newspapers is clear, measured typography and relatively small headlines.

The central letter used in the paper is “Frank-Riehl” in its various forms. The *HaMevaser* newspaper also has a division in content and design between the printed newspaper for weekdays and the printed one for Shabbat.

Yated Neeman

Yated Ne'eman was established in July 1985 to serve as the mouthpiece of the Lithuanian Haredi faction. In late 1985, when the first issue of *Yated Ne'eman* was published, it is said that Rabbi Shach examined it at length and angrily asked: “Why are all the headlines the “Haim” font and not “Frank-Riehl”?” (Michelson, 1998). The story illustrates the sensitivity of Haredi society to the shape of the letter as well as the importance of the shape of the letter in a way that corresponds to the content.

In a decision by the newspaper’s editors, led by Rabbi Shach, it was determined that the newspaper would be liberal in nature (Zevuluni, 1985, p. 6). Certain things that the newspaper did was considered “taboo” in the Haredi newspapers of the time i.e., the *HaModia* newspaper. Non-religious journalists were employed by *Yated Ne'eman* and pictures of non-religious personalities were published, along with plenty of colour photographs, not necessarily of Torah public figures and rabbis. The visuals to which the Hassidic public is accustomed have changed and the newspaper, and especially the magazine supplements, have become more “Israeli” and less “ultra-Orthodox”, that is, colourful chromo pages and titles in varied typography.

The newspaper’s editors wrote about this new look in an editorial, and this is what they wrote:

Regarding the professional style, as well as the design and external form, there is nothing wrong in this matter, if printing and graphics are used in one way or another, since, as stated, we have a clear and solid tradition of Torah view. However, we have no “tradition” and “ancestral custom” regarding the types and sizes of letters and columns, etc. These things change from time to time, as the nature of life has changed rapidly in recent generations, and no one will say that using washing machines or word processors, instead of the old laundry tub and a quill is considered “New is forbidden from the Torah” (Shkedi, 2022).

The newspaper represents the worldview of Torah scholars in the Lithuanian sector. Like the other ultra-Orthodox dailies, *Yated Ne'eman* does not deal with crime and sports, rarely deals with technology and other secular matters, and does not publish pictures of women. This newspaper also has a special supplement added to the Shabbat edition. The contents of the newspaper and its design are meticulously censored by a committee consisting of seven heads of Yeshivot (Michelson, 1998).

The newspaper’s target audience are Haredi people of all ages from the Lithuanian faction. The paper is published also in English for the United States and Europe.



Figure 4. The *Yated Ne'eman* logo from 2011 (*Yated Ne'eman* (Israel), 2017).

The ideological difference between the Hassidic newspapers and the Lithuanian newspaper is visually evident. *Yated Ne'eman*'s logo (see Figure 4) is characterised by diagonals indicating forward movement. It is prominent and dominant and conveys a confident message, avoids decoration and characterises its target audience – the Lithuanian Haredi segment, who advocate uncompromising learning. The contrasting choice between black and white also connects to the “colours” of ultra-Orthodox clothing.

The *Yated Ne'eman* newspaper has a Torah supplement for Shabbat called Shabbat Kodesh (Holy Sabbath). As in the Hasidic newspapers, this addition also contains stories of the righteous, and Torah related articles intended for reading on Shabbat. The added symbol is designed with a calligraphic letter with a basic style including serifs. For the thickness of the letter, thin lines and serifs were chosen, which is in contrast to the style of the letter in the newspaper logo used for weekdays.



Figure 5. The American edition of *Yated Ne'eman*, May 27th 2018 (Yated Neeman, n.d.).

Yated Ne'eman's English edition uses liberal and openminded graphics as compared to its Israeli counterpart. This can be seen in the ratio between the text and the photos.

HaPeles

HaPeles, which continues the name of a monthly newspaper that existed in Eastern Europe in the early twentieth century, was first published in 2012. It is identified with the extremist “Jerusalem faction” of the Lithuanian Haredi community. The content of the newspaper deals with matters of view. The newspaper is characterised by its strong opinions and polemical style, without publishing women and issues related to the state of Israel and Zionism.

An example of the newspaper's extreme content, which is also reflected in its typography, can be seen in its dedicated supplement to cover the 70 years of the State of Israel (see Figure 6). The title chosen for the supplement is: “70 years of darkness: from 1948 to 2009, seventy years of exile of thought”. The selected fonts express in their form the reservations about the Zionist idea. The font in which the words “70 years” were written is round in shape, modern, and reminiscent of the font chosen for the 70th-anniversary celebrations of the State of Israel. The font chosen for the word “dark” is an adaptation of the traditional “Frank-Riehl” font. Deleting the letter in some of its

parts freely expresses the idea of deleting the traditional identity, which is the theme of the whole supplement.



Figure 6. The supplement in the *HaPeles* newspaper about the “70 years of darkness”, Passover 2018 (Gonez, 2022).



Figure 7. The Logo of the *HaPeles* newspaper (n.d.).

The logo of the *HaPeles* newspaper continues the design line of the *Yated Ne'eman* newspaper and emphasises the straight line. Unlike the Hassidic dailies, the newspaper's emblem is not built of ornate letters with serifs and has no affinity for letters from the past. The addition of the colour red is considered an exception in the newspapers of the Ashkenazi Haredi society. The design addition, in the form of four red circles, serves as a vowel mark (along with the punctuation in the letter Peh). It is very prominent and emphasizes the letter Peh in all its symbolism. This letter is the only one that appears with its vowel and punctuation. Above the symbol and below it there are straight lines that emphasize the name of the newspaper (peles means a level in Hebrew).

Similar content, different image: Lithuanian press and Hasidic press

As mentioned, the rift between the Hasidim and the Lithuanians is not only religious but mostly ideological. It refers to their different identities, whose characteristics can be seen not only in content but also in form, colour and fonts. From the names of the newspapers, the ideological differences between the two main groups that make up the ultra-Orthodox society are evident: among the Hasidim the newspaper is an informant (*HaModia*) and an announcer (*HaMevaser*) of good news,¹¹ while among the Lithuanians, where the value of Torah study prevails, the newspaper must be as stable as a reliable stake (*Yated Ne'eman*)¹² and as straight as a level (*HaPeles*) so that the readers will not deviate from the path of the Torah.

¹¹ Isaiah, 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger of good tidings, that announces peace, the harbinger of good tidings, that announces salvation; that says unto Zion: "Thy God reigns!"

¹² Isaiah, 22:23 And I will fasten him as a peg in a sure place; and he shall be for a throne of honor to his father's house.

The Haredi society's acceptance of the newspaper as a medium that preserves the high regard for the written word unique to them (Zak-Teller, 2003, p. 12), and is relevant and common to all factions.



Figure 8. The *HaModia* and *HaPeles* newspapers, July 23rd, 2013.

Photo by E. Grossman.

Figure 8 shows how the Haredi social and ideological perceptions are expressed in typography. The two newspapers, *HaPeles* and *HaModia*, appeared on the same date and reported on the Knesset's decision to approve the recruitment of yeshiva boys.

Newspaper logos

The two Lithuanian logos reflect a more modern and innovative language compared to the Hasidic daily symbols, from the *HaModia* and the *HaMevaser*, and convey a sense of strength and power, resulting from the amount of black colour in the letter. The use of square shaped letters without “thorns” and without direct or indirect reference to the shape of letters found in Jewish holy books relays a message to its readership.

Newspaper pages

The typographic design of the pages differs between the Lithuanian newspapers and the Hasidic newspapers. While the latter maintain relatively small text sizes, and hardly create a hierarchy between articles, in Lithuanian newspapers one can clearly see what is more important and what is less important already from the size of the headline and the background design given to them. The typography of the ultra-Orthodox press serves as a social and political seismograph, and one can usually already see from the design of the first pages what is happening within the ultra-Orthodox society.

The page design of the daily *Yated Ne'emán* and *HaPeles* is innovative, colourful, and modern in its conception. Newspaper headlines often occupy the entire page, while the article itself is pushed to the inside pages. This is a design concept that originated in the world of television.

Letter design

Lithuanian newspapers have more diversity in the use of fonts. The Hasidic newspapers will prefer to continue to use the traditional letter, reminiscent of the sacred letters (Frank-Riehl, Drogolin, Vilna), combined with a few additional fonts according to the type of article.

In both groups of readers, the event that would grab the biggest headline would be the death of a rabbi or rebbe. Typographically, the headline will be much bigger than what is used in secular newspapers to report on the death of a famous personality, regardless of his or her importance. However, similar to the secular newspapers, the font used to announce the death of someone will most often be the “Haim” font.

Advertising and advertisements

The role of the advertisement is to advertise a product, an idea, but in fact it serves as a cultural text even before it is published. Many studies have focused on the dialogue between advertisements and society (Schudson, 1981, 1984; Tsarfaty & Zeevi, 2012), and how, as a social text, it reflects values and worldviews (First, 1998; Jhally, 1987, pp. 22–23). Advertising makes frequent use of the value and belief systems of the people in the society that it is intended for (Muchnik & Kantor, 2004, p. 133).

Advertising in the ultra-Orthodox press seeks, on the one hand, to remain within the restrictive definitions, to meet public expectations as expressed by leaders, parents, and teachers, and on the other hand, it wants to be a worthy alternative to secular advertising.

Clear and strict rules accompany the world of ultra-Orthodox advertising from its inception, in content, form and colour (Galperin, 2016, p. 26).

The perception of advertising in the ultra-Orthodox press reflects an idyllic reality in accordance with its social and religious aspirations. Shudson reinforces the ultra-Orthodox view, as expressed in the Haredi dailies, saying that the advertisement as a whole should not paint reality as it is but instead it should focus on the type of life worthy of imitation (Shudson 1984, p. 11).

The Haredi advertisements must adhere to strict rules and ensure that the message and form are filtered. Consumption in the Haredi world is for subsistence, and even if it is for pure pleasure, it is not possible to state this in the advertisement. Public institutions or private companies wishing to advertise in the Haredi press have to adjust their advertisements so that the message suits the Haredi public and does not express in the form of the letters, the colours used or its placement, negative messages such as: immodesty, pleasure, gluttony, laughter, “killing” time, wasting time that can be spent on Torah learning, gossip or God-forbid, messages of sexuality or violence (Levi, 1988, p. 242). Advertisements related in any way to women will not appear in newspapers just as news related to women will be omitted or changed (Zak-Teller, 2003, p. 14; Levi, 1988, p. 57). The Haredi public, accustomed to reading, will look for in the small print, interpretations of every word and every form of letter. Therefore, advertisers are careful in their advertising decisions. “The Haredi sector are people of words” (Levi, 2008) as people with a high perception of visual literacy (Shalita, 2013), the Haredi press will prefer headlines that have wit and wisdom and a design built only from letters, over an image.

Each image is related to a broad context that will never be in dialogue with other texts. This explanation fits very well with the idea of Haredi advertising, which is layered and made of details, each of which is important in its own right.

The typographic choice of Haredi advertising has several guidelines: the publication must be based on a reliable source of authority, be censored (by a committee of rabbis, the newspaper editor, the ombudsman on behalf of the advertising body, and others), and in most cases must be designed in Hebrew, Yiddish or Aramaic, reflecting the lifestyle and languages of its readers.

D. Designing the letter and social status

The choice of the letter in the Haredi press is carefully chosen and also indicates the social status of the product being advertised, as perceived by the consumer. The small number of advertisements for luxury products in the daily press and on Haredi neighbourhood streets can indicate the Haredi society's aspiration for modesty and simplicity (Tsarfaty & Zeevi, 2012). However, the words luxury, glory and splendour are not foreign to the Haredi world, the opposite is the case in typography. The term "respectable" often means something worthy to bring into the house, as opposed to the term "street" whose place is outside, on the street (denim fabric and colour, for example). Maintaining dignity is a value in the Hassidic and Lithuanian Haredi world. There is a strict adherence to dignified dress all year round and not just on Saturdays and holidays (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat, page 111, side A). The feeling of prestige and dignity is reflected in the choice of the image, the words, expressions and typography.

In figures 9–10, we see bags of the *HaModia* newspaper in which the newspapers were distributed at various fairs intended for the Haredi public. The designs on the bags convey the two most important messages when it comes to the press: dignity and cleanliness. What is not "clean" and "respectable" does not enter the house. The sanctity of the house and the division into things that enter it and those that do not enter it are a recurring and a significant motif in Haredi advertising. The Haredi home is a stronghold of privacy. Mass media bridge the gap between the world inside the home and the world outside it and make the reader and viewer of the various advertisements, a partner to what is happening outside. "Our newspaper is an educational book, every parent who brings the newspaper to their home knows that its contents are suitable for the Haredi world" (Zak-Teller, 2003).



Figure 9. A bag that was given out in the directors' forum of *HaModia*, 2014.

Photo by E. Grossman



Figure 10. A bag that was distributed in a health fair for the Haredi world, 2014.

Photo by E. Grossman.

Figure 9 shows a bag that conveys a message of dignity, taken from the world of Haredi design. The characteristics are dark and elegant colours: black and gold, plant ornaments taken from the world of holy books, and the newspaper's logo in its original form.

Figure 10 shows a bag distributed at a health fair for the Haredi public. The bag combines the colours white, blue, and green, as befits a health fair, and conveys naturalness and design cleanliness in colour and typography. Physical cleanliness is related to cleanliness of the mind (Rakover, 1991, p. 270; Oryan, 1997).

Among the Hasidim, the respect that is given to their clothes and their behaviour comes from the concept of "glorifying a mitzvah". Rabbi Steinzaltz, a Chabad follower, associates the concept of "glory" with aesthetics and with concepts of integrity, proper behaviour, and honesty (Goldman, 2007, p. 17).

Conclusions

The daily and weekly Haredi press is considered as something that "under the circumstances" (Groveis, 2019) is needed and yet is a major player in the Haredi visual world. The Ashkenazi Haredi press is divided into defined sectors. The newspapers of the Hassidic communities preserve a long-standing typographic, advertising, intra-community tradition, based on the design style of Jewish newspapers from early twentieth-century Europe. The newspapers of the Lithuanian communities reflect the character of the public who read them, who are more modern in their lifestyle. Even though there is strict control over the content, these newspapers reflect modernism in their typographic layout and letter style selection. The newspapers in both groups undergo strict editing in both content and form, and their respective rabbinical councils work hard to adapt them to their respective readership.¹⁵

The visual design among the Haredi, Hassidic and Lithuanian public is found in the subtext of the printed daily press, the newspapers *HaModia*, *HaMevaser*, *Yated Ne'eman*, and *HaPeles*. The subtext is the meaning given to the unique language: a combination of modern Hebrew, the sacred Hebrew language, Aramaic and Yiddish. This type of vocabulary is suitable for the Haredi reader, which includes expressions from the sources, paraphrases on verses and acronyms as well as a unique font design that uses the traditional letters with serifs for the Hassidic public, and modern and innovative letters for the Lithuanian public.

The choice of letter, colour, and composition are borrowed, among other things, from the world of clothing, which has many rules, and reflects what is happening within the community (Hassidic men's clothing will be adapted to the design of their newspapers, and Lithuanian Haredi women's clothing will be adapted to their newspapers). The differences between the Hasidic and Lithuanian groups are evident in their attitude to the visual elements in the various types of printing and advertising, and they form the infrastructure for the other divisions – women and men, adults and children, weekdays and holidays, Saturdays and holidays.

¹⁵ For *HaModia* – Rabbi Razminsky; for *HaMevaser* – Rabbi Meir Heizler and Rabbi Aryeh Pozen; for *Yated Neeman* – there is a committee made up of seven heads of Yeshiva, judges and those who adjudicate Halachic matters, all students of Rabbi Shach.

The Haredi public are proficient readers and are aware of the subtleties of the shape and size of the letter from an early age. Therefore, the letter serves both as content and form, and its uses in the visual world are many and varied. In addition to being a tool for content, the letter will be used for an image, a Hebrew date, gematria and to create an atmosphere of sacred or secular, depending on the typographic choice.

In contrast to the general press, there are separate references to advertising intended for weekdays and those intended for the Sabbath and holidays in the Haredi publics. While the former will enjoy a certain degree of innovation, manifested in rich typography, the latter will be designed with conservatism and care, will remain faithful to the traditional ornate and serif-rich letter, relating these advertisements to the world of the holy scriptures.

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ІННОВАЦІЙНИЙ КОНСЕРВАТИЗМ В УЛЬТРАОРТОДОКСАЛЬНІЙ ТИПОГРАФІЦІ В ІЗРАЇЛІ

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Мета статті — вивчити відмінності у сприйнятті та підходах до типографського дизайну серед різних спільнот, що складають громаду харедім. Загалом на форму літери буде впливати поділ на релігійні та нерелігійні жанри, а також соціальний поділ всередині харедім між «хасидами» і «литваками». Методологія дослідження базується на комплексному використанні загальнонаукових методів: аналітичного, систематичного, історичного та порівняльного. Наукова новизна. Стаття є додатковим рівнем до попередніх розвідок і досліджує єврейську літеру та її роль у світі журналістики як передачу повідомлення в соціально-освітньо-ідеологічному контексті, навіть без посилання на те, що насправді написано. Дослідження розкриває та розшифровує боротьбу за владу та взаємини, які існують в ультраортодоксальному світі, через образи та механізми, які через них активуються, та їх результати, як частину візуальної культури. Висновки. Щоденна та щотижнева преса харедім розглядається як те, що «за цих обставин» є необхідним, і все ж є основним гравцем у візуальному світі харедім. Преса ашкеназі харедім розділена на певні сектори. Газети хасидських громад зберігають давню друкарську, рекламну, внутрішньообщинну традицію, засновану на стилі оформлення єврейських газет початку ХХ ст. в Європі. Газети литвацьких громад відображають характер їхньої читацької аудиторії, сучаснішої за своїм способом життя. Попри суворий контроль за змістом, ці газети відображають модернізм, що стосується типографічного макета та вибору шрифту. Газети обох груп піддаються суворому редагуванню як за змістом, так і за формою, і відповідні ради рабинів докладають всіх зусиль, щоб адаптувати їх до своєї читацької аудиторії. Вибір шрифту, кольору та композиції запозичений, серед іншого, зі світу одягу, який має багато правил і відображає те, що відбувається всередині спільноти. Відмінності між хасидськими та литвацькими групами очевидні у їхньому ставленні до візуальних елементів в різних видах друку і реклами. Представники громади харедім є досвідченими читачами та з раннього віку обізнані про тонкощі форми й розміру букви. Отже, шрифт служить як змістом, так і формою, а його використання у візуальному світі є різноманітним. Крім того, що шрифт є інструментом для створення контенту, він буде використовуватися для зображення, дати на івриті, гематрії та для створення атмосфери священного або світського, залежно від друкарського вибору.

Ключові слова: преса харедім; буква; типографський; шрифт; газети; Ізраїль

