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Graphic design in the printed translations of Franz Rosenzweig

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ABSTRACT

One of Franz Rosenzweig's most significant ventures for Jewish renewal was the translation into German, which he initiated, of the Bible, prayerbook and religious poems. The aim of this essay is to explore the graphic design of the page that Rosenzweig selected for the printed edition of his translations. I will argue that the graphic design of the Siddur page is not just an aesthetic aspect of the translation but should be recognized as an educational and dialogic concern. Rosenzweig's preoccupation with page design is not limited to the Siddur, as the reader of *The Star of Redemption* will also notice his distinctive influence on the visual aspects of the text. It is expressed in the way he forms the six-pointed Star of David, the triangles which make up the star, and the way in which they appear in the book and are positioned on the page. And if the graphic depiction of the triangles is not enough, one only needs to visually experience what is described by Rosenzweig at the end of the book: the image of the star reveals the face of man.

KEYWORDS

Franz Rosenzweig; prayer book; translation; design; poems

> Every man who is fully man must have a sense for poetry,
> actually it is even necessary that he dabbles in it;
> at least that he once wrote poetry;
> for if one can possibly be a man without writing poetry,
> he will only become a man
> if he at one moment wrote poetry for a while.[1]

One of Franz Rosenzweig's most significant ventures for Jewish renewal was the translation enterprise he initiated, both by himself and in collaboration with Martin Buber (Krochmalnik and Werner 2014). He intended that this undertaking would provide German speakers – both Jews and non-Jews – not only with access to the Hebrew classics of Jewish literature, but also to draw their attention to Jewish sources and the vital spirit of Judaism, and to the way in which Jews could flourish in the German-Jewish cultural milieu of the time. Rosenzweig believed that his unique dialogic approach to translation would transform traditional Jewish patterns of thinking and change the way Jewish sources would be read and studied.

Scholarly interest in Rosenzweig's translation schemes is not new, and they have been studied from a number of different vantage points: from the dialogic and existential perspective; as an element of the Free Jewish *Lehrhaus*; as part of the Jewish-German symbiosis; and as a component of the educational programme in the German-Jewish educational

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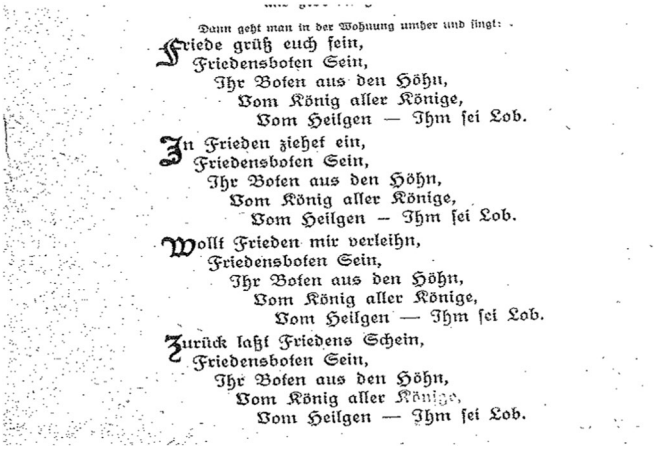
system. Some of the research, as I will indicate below, has been appropriately devoted to Rosenzweig's innovative approaches to translation, as well as to the joint translation enterprise of Buber-Rosenzweig.[2] However, this essay will attempt to single out a fascinating and intriguing element of Rosenzweig's translations which has heretofore gone unnoticed, namely, the graphic design of the page that Rosenzweig selected for the printed edition of his translations. I will argue that this was not merely a matter of aesthetics, but rather for Rosenzweig serious ethical and dialogic decisions of the first order were involved, and he sought to resolve them by designing the page like a poem or a play.

It should be noted that Rosenzweig was not the only writer who addressed the aesthetic and graphic design of texts. During that period, one finds that other poets and writers paid similar attention to issues of design, among them Charles Baudelaire. Rosenzweig's distinctiveness expresses itself in the way he conceives of page design and how he incorporates it into his writing on Judaism and Jewish literature in translating the Bible, the Siddur (prayer book), and the Grace after Meals.

This essay expounds upon an element that I wish to introduce into academic discourse: the graphic design of the Siddur page, which should be recognized as an educational and dialogic concern and not only an aesthetic one. Accordingly, the article will outline the steps needed to understand the unique aesthetic characteristics of the graphic design of the page in a number of introductory sections on translation, education, and prayer, which, taken together, advance the proposed interpretation.[3] It will describe the factors that motivated Rosenzweig to arrange a text that originated in another language and context in order to insure its vibrancy and enable it to directly communicate with readers. Rosenzweig's verbal formulations were not sufficient to create the dynamic reaction that he sought in the reader, so he instigated it instead through the artistic and formative features of the page.

Rosenzweig's preoccupation with page design is not limited to the Siddur. The reader of *The Star of Redemption* will notice his distinctive imprint on the visual aspects of the text, expressed in the way he forms the six-pointed Star of David, the triangles which make up the star, and the way in which they appear in the book and are positioned on the page. And if the graphic depiction of the triangles is not enough, there is also the visual experience Rosenzweig describes at the end of the *Star*: looking at the star reveals the face of a man.

A portion of the Shabbat prayers in translation



Dann geht man in der Wohnung umher und singt:

Friede grüß euch fein,
Friedensboten Sein,
Ihr Boten aus den Höhn,
Vom König aller Könige,
Vom Heilgen — Ihm sei Lob.

In Frieden ziehet ein,
Friedensboten Sein,
Ihr Boten aus den Höhn,
Vom König aller Könige,
Vom Heilgen — Ihm sei Lob.

Wollt Frieden mir verleihn,
Friedensboten Sein,
Ihr Boten aus den Höhn,
Vom König aller Könige,
Vom Heilgen — Ihm sei Lob.

Zurück laßt Friedens Schein,
Friedensboten Sein,
Ihr Boten aus den Höhn,
Vom König aller Könige,
Vom Heilgen — Ihm sei Lob.

The above excerpt is taken from the translation of the unique song "Welcoming of the Angels on Shabbat Eve," taken from the book, *Tischdank* (*Grace after Meals)* prepared by Rosenzweig in 1921, one of his translations of canonical Jewish texts. In a letter written to Gershom Scholem dated 10 March 1921 he explains how the translation began:

> The original idea was to make it possible for some of my guests – Christian friends and those Jews who don't read Hebrew – to take part somehow. I could not bear the thought of using one of the existing translations, written in the German of the newspapers or of religious instructors. (Glatzer 1998, 101–102)

He adds that if he had a Jewish guest who could read Hebrew but did not understand a word of it, he concealed the existence of the translation from him: "The uncomprehended Hebrew gives him more than the finest translation." (102)

Gershom Scholem complained to Rosenzweig about his translation and its lack of authenticity, for in his view prayers should be recited in Hebrew (See Scholem 1989, 59–600). A close reading of their correspondence reveals the intensity of their discussion about the need to be "a member of the family" regarding fluency in the Hebrew language.

Looking at the way this page is laid out enables us to identify some of the underlying principles of Rosenzweig's translation enterprise, which endeavoured to do more than simply explain unintelligible Hebrew texts to German speakers. He did not offer his new readers the fundamentals of the prayers or blessings, but instead provided them with an innovative and spiritual work of art in the realm of the traditional Jewish liturgy: prayer uniquely designed as poetry. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that the content of Rosenzweig's translations of the prayers and the Torah was also meant to be spiritually innovative, much like the liturgical poetry of earlier generations.

The typography of the prayer book

In order to appreciate the distinctiveness of Rosenzweig's contribution to the graphic design of the page, one must take into account that there is no required or preferred way to design a prayer book from the perspective of Jewish tradition. Moreover, historically, one of the most prominent aspects of prayer book design was its simplicity. Therefore, Rosenzweig's attention to this aspect calls for more than just a passing mention.

Those who designed prayer books had to address two practical concerns: providing the user with a prayer book that was easy to read and whose contents were easy to navigate. This included the readability of the letters and the suitability of the fonts used. The Siddur is traditionally accompanied by explanations that serve as a "user's guide" for the reader. Meir Bar Ilan describes it as follows:

> The age-old concern for the way the hand-written Torah scroll was inscribed suggests that typography should play a significant role in the field of Hebrew publishing. Indeed, to this day, the design of a page of the Talmud is sacrosanct, and students are expected not only to master the contents of the Talmud but also to recall the folio, page, and line on where the material is found, even though this information is of no material significance … When one peruses the wide array of books that have been printed over hundreds of years, he will discover that while the love for books is obvious on every page, on the whole, Hebrew typography is in a sad state (Bar Ilan 1999, 505–526).

Nonetheless, a review of the way pages of the Siddur are designed yields two principal typographical traditions: the kabbalistic and the German. The German tradition used

Gothic fonts in integrating the translation into the Siddur page. The kabbalistic tradition added the requirement to meditate on the Divine Names, and in so doing made mystical meditation a part of the prayer experience.[4]

Bar Ilan summarizes his criticism as follows:

> In general it may be said that from the vantage point of typography (without taking the text into consideration), the Siddur lacks an air of spiritual grandeur. It is abundantly clear that typographical design was not at the top of the publishers' list of priorities (even if they declared otherwise). While there are the beginnings of typographical sensitivity, there is a long way to go to fill in the gap (Kallus 2002).

Bar Ilan's criticism is offered with the expectation that the design of the Siddur undergoes a transformation, and thus he calls for a critical examination of the modern editions of the Siddur, for no matter how beautiful and accessible they may be, their publishers are not sensitive to issues of typography. At that point, he offers a marginal comment regarding the way that poets and publishers of poetry deal with page design that deserves attention: "It is not incorrect to say that there is more attention paid to graphic concerns in a book of modern poetry written by a novice than to the prayer book which contains poetry that goes back thousands of years" (Kallus 2002).

Did Rosenzweig attempt to design his prayer book page in a poetic format? Did he breach the traditional rules and procedures of printing prayer books? In my view, the answer must take into consideration aesthetic and ritual aspects, as well as factors relating to the way German literature was formatted, inasmuch as German was the target language of his translation.

In a letter written to his parents in January 1917 he speaks out regarding the literary attributes of Jewish tradition and traditional Jewish ritual: "I am against everything 'dignified' in our worship. Prose is our poetry. All these artificial solemnities without traditional roots are false … One should preserve forms with genuine meaning, and we have enough of these" (Glatzer 1998, 45). Similarly, he writes in his essay "Scripture and Word" that the Bible is based on prose.[5] However, he does not intend to negate the importance of poetry and poetic writing, but rather to strengthen it: "All poetry that has been written in the Bible's light – and indeed poetry more than prose, Judah Halevi more than Maimonides, Dante more than Aquinas, Goethe more than Kant – has been animated by the Bible's spirit of course" (Buber and Rosenzweig 1994, 46).

The significance of translation for Rosenzweig

Rosenzweig was preoccupied with the issue of translation in more than one way, as a translator of canonical texts and as a scholar seeking to understand the dynamics of translation: "Only one who is profoundly convinced of the impossibility of translation can really undertake it. Not by any means of the impossibility of translation in general … but of the impossibility of the particular translation he is about to embark on" (Glatzer 1998, 100–101). Rosenzweig exhibits an acute awareness of translation's formative role in establishing and shaping culture, beginning with the influence of Luther's translation of the Bible on German culture.[6] The philosophical significance of engaging in translation has been dealt with in the literature in no small measure, with an important contribution to the field made by translators in Germany in the early twentieth century. For example, Walter Benjamin offers an assessment of his translations and of the role of the translator in

general in his introduction to the translation of Baudelaire's poetry into German, which constitutes a foundational text in the art of translation (Benjamin 1996, 253–263; see also Benjamin 1989).

The translation movement was called "*ha'takah*" (copying) in Hebrew, in the sense of "transferring," similar to the French "traduire," which means to transfer or hand over (from the Latin *translatus*). The translator is at once a traitor and an advocate, both in the source language and the target language. While he tries to be an insignificant player in the primary task of providing a voice for the original speaker, he is actually involved in creating a new piece of art which has within it the potential to even inform the author himself of what he did not realize existed in the original. In explaining the process of translation and his Bible translation, Rosenzweig writes:

> In the Old Testament, then, the traditional punctuation is, for the translator who recognizes the obligation to let Scripture be suffused once again with the breath of the word, not so helpful as at first it seemed to be … the obligation of hearing the breathing movement of the word from the pen-strokes of the Scripture, is clearest when the passage is not only segmented according to its content, but also obeys a self-imposed formal law in the metrical rhythms of poetry. The metrical linkage generates of itself—at least in a poetry that like the poetic parts of the Bible eschews the charms of cross-relations between verse-ending and thought-ending — an upper limit for the length of the "breathing-colon"; when the line ends the reader breathes. Now in other cases the upper limit is also the lower limit; the metrical pattern is thus immediately legible from the typography, and the poetic structure has as many lines as it does verses. But in our translation, this is only preponderantly the case, and not systematically. For us the respiratory movement of natural speech must sometimes break the metrical dance step of the poetry. So, for example, in the dying Jacob's proclamations to his twelve tribal sons (Genesis 49). In each case there the first two cola of the translation correspond only to a single verse of the meter, most strikingly in the prophecy to Judah. The inwardly rhythmic speech of the word wins out over the discrete pulses of the song (Buber and Rosenzweig 1994, 44–45).

It is important to note the careful way Rosenzweig relates not only to the translation of the content and form, but also to the way the reader breathes and exhales while reading the translation. The rhythm of the text is often established through the movement of the air, the movement of breathing, and even by the movement that the translator creates on the page.

However, my concern is not on the process of translation as such but, rather, on its graphic design and printing style. These aspects are dealt with both in the context of the poetry and the prayers that Rosenzweig translated, as well his translation of the Bible into German, in which he collaborated with Martin Buber.[7] In the course of writing and envisioning the Bible translation, he tells of his attention to the elements of graphic design, and states in no uncertain terms:

> Still more important is another thing. The incorporation of a dialogic element, framing the narrative about an alternation of question and answer, speech and counterspeech, proposition and qualification, has been discussed here as a principle of biblical narrative form. It is in fact present in the Bible not only in narrative but also in the Bible's other genres: in the poetry of the Psalms, in the rhetoric of the Prophets, even in the casuistry of the law … When the Psalms are spoken in prayer, when the laws are followed, when the prophecies are believed, they lose immediately their monologic dumbness and gain a voice to call the eternal interlocutor to dialogue: dialogue between man who listens and God who hears (Buber and Rosenzweig 1994, 141).[8]

For Rosenzweig, the idea is not merely to translate material; his interest is to translate texts that can be described as having a ritual dimension: hence his decision to take on the translation of the Bible and the prayers. And despite the differences between them, it may very well be that his translation of Judah Halevi's poetry is cut from the same cloth. This is best illustrated in the course of his translation by the way he comments, and meditates upon, the meaning of God's holy Ineffable Name.

This is Rosenzweig's translation of Judah Halevi's "*Reshut* for the holiday of Shavuot:"

> **J**ahraus, jahrein in Deinem Haus faßt Lagerstand
> das Glücksvolk, wo Dein Name drin sein Lager fand
> **H**och, welthoch wohnt der Name und hat Sein doch in
> zerschlagnem Herz und wo sich wer in Jammer wand.
> **U**nd Himmelshöhn fassen Ihn nicht, ob Er herab
> zum Sinai stieg, wohnt im Buschs Dornflammenbrand.
> **D**enn nahe ist Sein Weg gar sehr und gleich sehr weit,
> da was Er schuf, ans Selbst Er und ans Andre band.
> **A**llein Gott dank ichs, wenn mein Herz Gedanken spann,
> und Ihm nur, wenn Rede mein und Antwort stand.

The translation is not all that interesting, unlike the meditations in the notes that Rosenzweig appends to the poem where he primarily relates to the way in which the name of God – the Tetragrammaton – is portrayed: ("High, high up dwells the Name, which has being in the broken heart and wherever someone suffers in anguish.")

Rosenzweig comments as follows:

> The contradiction that God is at once near and distant coalesces in the fact that He has a name. Anything having a name can be spoken about and spoken to, depending on whether it is absent or present. Since God is never absent, there can be no concept of God (There can certainly be concepts of false gods, but not of the true One). God is the only one whose name is also His concept, whose concept is also His name. One calls God merely God, and every other name given to Him has only this meaning (Cohen 2000, 59).

Is it possible to translate God's name? As opposed to speaking about God, does God's name have a substitute or translation? Or perhaps it is precisely the very nearness and the distance that accompany the use of God's name, in order to express presence and absence, that enable its translation into other languages? The distinctive stylistic devices in Halevi's poem may include using the letters of the author's name, "Yehudah," to open each stanza, but Rosenzweig is more interested in engaging in a learned discussion about the sublime name of God, the Tetragrammaton, which cannot be uttered.

The role of prayer in Rosenzweig's educational doctrine

Rosenzweig's interest in education in general, and in Jewish and adult education in particular, is worthy of comprehensive treatment (Glatzer 1955).[9] Richard Cohen even goes so far as to claim that, "There is no topic to which Franz Rosenzweig devoted more attention, as a person or in his writings, than that of education and Jewish Education" (Cohen 2000, ix–x).

In his famous essay, "It is Time: Concerning the Study of Judaism," in which he outlined a detailed plan to reform Jewish education in Germany, Rosenzweig raised an important and particularly interesting question regarding what the prescribed course of study

should be.[10] He was not in a position to analyze the various curricula that were being used at the time across Germany. Nevertheless, his innovative proposal has never received the attention it deserves, namely, that the Siddur should be the primary text of study. He presents this idea despite the obvious place that the Bible has in Jewish culture and western culture in general, and despite the traditional and halakhic significance of the study of the Talmud and halakhic literature. Rosenzweig wanted to turn the Siddur into the foundational text of study in Jewish schools.[11]

In Rosenzweig's view, prayer, which was foreign to most Jewish students in Germany who were cut off from Jewish life and experience, had the potential to become the heart of their encounter with the essence of being Jewish:

> When we consider to what degree our institutions of public worship have become the sieve as well as the reservoir for whatever had survival value in the three-thousand years of our spiritual history, we shall have to admit that within their seemingly narrow sphere everything desirable is included. (Glatzer 1955, 26)

Rosenzweig's proposal to turn the Siddur into the primary textbook for Jewish education is without a doubt a creative one. The basic text of traditional Jewish study at that time, and perhaps even until today, remains the Talmud. There is only one other candidate for the position, and that would be one of the two major codes of Jewish law: either the *Mishneh Torah* of Maimonides or R. Joseph Caro's *Shulhan Arukh*.

The book that could be at the centre of the Jewish world much as it is at the centre of Protestant Christianity would be the Bible. Despite the fact that this idea has not been accepted in the wider Jewish world, it does play that role in the world of Zionist education.[12] The Bible became the primary book of study of the Zionist movement as part of the ethos of renewal and the return to the land. It tells the story of the life of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel and creates a new awareness of the link to the earth and the land.

Rosenzweig, however, against the backdrop of all these choices, presents a completely different idea, and proposes not to identify a basic text, but a book that encompasses all of Jewish history and Jewish life. The Siddur's structure organizes daily Jewish life, the cycle of the year and the holidays, and includes reminders for all the sad and happy events in Jewish history:

> The biblical literature of antiquity is the fountainhead of all living Judaism: the talmudic-rabbinical literature of later ages constitutes its encyclopedia; and in the philosophical writings we see its subtlest sublimation; yet the sum and substance of the whole of historical Judaism, its handbook and memorial tablet, will ever be the prayer book: both the daily and festival version, known as the Siddur and the Machzor. He to whom these volumes are not a sealed book has more than grasped the "essence of Judaism." He is informed with it as with life itself: he has within him a "Jewish world" (Glatzer 1998, 251).[13]

He approaches the Siddur from a developmental historical perspective since, as opposed to the Bible and even the Talmud, the Siddur is continually developing, and introduces the changes occurring in Jewish life into the text. The Siddur absorbs new prayers and new *piyuttim*; poets and rabbis leave their mark on it by adding a *piyut* or prayer, a new holiday to be celebrated, or even a new blessing.[14]

Rosenzweig categorizes the complex nature of the prayer book which includes chapters of the Bible, particularly the Psalms, and prayers from Biblical or Apocryphal sources. It also includes blessings which originated in rabbinic sources and the later *heikhalot*

literature, the Temple rites, or in groups of monastics, all which became part of Jewish ritual. It was later augmented by additions from Jewish communities in Germany, Spain, Israel, Babylon, Poland, Lithuania and England. Rosenzweig also cites a unique aspect of the Siddur: it constitutes a directory of the entire calendar year, a point he elaborates upon in the second part of the *Star of Redemption*. It encapsulates the complete human lifecycle from birth to death, as it follows man through rites of passage, marriage, sickness and mourning.

I make bold to make an even more far-reaching claim, that the way Rosenzweig tackles his translation project – in collaboration with Buber – is best understood by its relationship to the living text of the Siddur. That is, the massive effort that he expended in translating the Bible was not due to its literary or religious consequence but, rather, to the unique nature of the biblical idiom as a living language, one that continues to speak to its readers in the present.[15] This is how he describes the different types of literary styles:

> The biblical literature of antiquity may be seen as the source and the foundation of everything that is living in Judaism, its encyclopedic expression may be found in the Talmudic and rabbinic writings of later times, its sublimity may be discovered in the works of the philosophers – but all this notwithstanding the prayer book will forever remain the handbook and the sign post of historical Judaism. He to whom the prayer book is not sealed more than understands the 'essence of Judaism'; he possesses it as a portion of his inner life; he possesses a 'Jewish world' (Glatzer 1955, 29)

We see how Rosenzweig wants life to move towards the Torah and in doing so imbue it with a new spirit. The complex distinction he makes between Christianity and Judaism may help us understand what he means. That is, Christianity brought the divine down to the earth, and then connected it to mankind; as opposed to Judaism, for which divinity is transcendental, thus enabling man to connect with the divine through his day-to-day life. In practice, as Rosenzweig describes it, Judaism is already with the Father, and it is like the son, whereas Christianity, which moves in a historical fashion, is passed down by way of the son.

This is his description of prayer as a part of the concept of revelation in the *Star of Redemption*:

> This is the last that is reached in revelation, an overflowing of the soul's supreme and perfect trust: prayer. It is not at all a question here of knowing whether the prayer will be satisfied. The prayer itself is the answer. The soul prays with the words of the Psalm: 'Let not my prayer nor your love withdraw from me' (Psalm 66:20). It prays for the ability to pray, which is already given to it with the certitude of divine love. That it can pray is the greatest gift given to it in Revelation (Rosenzweig 2005, 198, Galli translation).

Studying prayer and Siddur in the *Freie Juedische Lehrhaus*

The rest of the story of Rosenzweig's involvement with the Siddur can be found in the way he valued its importance and study in the Jewish Free *Lehrhaus*. In a letter to Rudolf Hallo in which he presents his detailed plan for an open Beit Midrash he points out how it will differ from the schools for adults called Volk schools. He indicates what he hoped to accomplish and what was accomplished, and the unfulfilled wishes that he did not disclose publicly. This is one of Rosenzweig's most revealing letters. However, as Ephraim Meir points out in his book on the letters to Gritli, in general, Rosenzweig's letters reveal much of his inner struggles (Meir 2006).

One small comment of Rosenzweig reveals his wish to teach the Siddur, which was his ultimate desire from the beginning: "December 1922: 'I began to add subtitles to the Hebrew classes … since, from when I arrived here I taught the prayer book, now the governors suggested that the time has come to engage (formally-HB) in the siddur.'"[16]

The siddur and translation

The primary focus of this article is not on Rosenzweig's translations, but on the unique way he designed the page in his translations. Therefore, I will first list the different types of translations, both his alone and those he did in collaboration with Buber:

(1) The Poetry of R. Yehudah Halevi[17]
(2) The Bible – in collaboration with Martin Buber[18]
(3) Three Excerpts from the Prayer Book
   A. Friday night service[19]
   B. Grace After Meals – A *Tischdank*
   C. Yom Kippur Mahzor[20]

A distinction must be drawn between the various translation projects, particularly between the Siddur and his larger, more ambitious projects. The question of why he chose to translate the three last items is fascinating in itself, and perhaps tells us more about his personal and family preferences than anything else. What is the relationship, if any, between the three translations of excerpts from the prayer book and his two larger projects, the Bible and Halevi's poetry? It is clear that there is a connection. However, it seems that the practical element, the recitation of prayers and blessings, as opposed to the contemplative intention, the study of the living Torah, constitutes the decisive distinction between them.

The poetic model

In response to the question "What is poetry?" Jacques Derrida writes that poetry always addresses itself to someone; it is a dialogue between the anonymous reader and the poet. The poet will never know if the reader is reading the poem aloud, or to someone else, or if he commits it to memory, or simply reads it silently to himself (Derrida 1991, 221–240). For Derrida, poetry is always an invitation to dialogue.

It is interesting that in the Star of Redemption Rosenzweig uses exaggerated language to describe poetry as essential to "being human:"

> For poetry gives figure and discourse because it gives more than either: imagistic thinking, in which both are alive together. Because it is the most alive, poetry is the most indispensable art; and while it is not necessary that every man has a sense for music or painting, or dabbles in one of the two, reproductively or productively, every man who is fully man must have a sense for poetry, actually it is even necessary at least that he once wrote poetry; for if one can possibly be a man without writing poetry, he will only become a man if he at one moment wrote poetry for a while (Rosenzweig 2005, 263).

The first stylistic model that should be noted in Rosenzweig's translation is the model of poetic writing (See Kornberg- Greenberg 1995, 791–800). Here there is an attempt to

transform the Bible and the prayer book into poetry. This is a familiar image in Jewish tradition from the times of the Psalms. However, Rosenzweig seeks to highlight it by the way the words are positioned on the page.

This is how Rosenzweig describes the role of poetry in the arts:

> To this character of the whole, determined by the tonality, there is then added the immersion in the detail owing to the choice of words. This is what is called the individual "language" of the singular poet, something that we apparently better master as a result of our being accustomed to the written word and therefore, what has been observed for much longer than the equally individual "tonality," this "tonality" that only he hears who takes to heart the poet's admonition "Above all, do not read, always sing!" (Rosenzweig 2005, 265)

The way poetry is reproduced on the page, then, plays a role in enabling one to "sing" the poem, and not be satisfied with silent reading. Is it possible that what enables one to go beyond the dead letters and experience the living words of poetry is the physical arrangement of the text on the page? And Rosenzweig goes on to explain what lies behind written poetry – the idea itself: "The idea is that which speaks in the poem to the spectator, like the melody in the musical work and the plastic figure in the visual work. The idea is not somewhere behind the poem, it is in it" (265).

If we examine Rosenzweig's project of the translation of Halevi's poetry, we see that he produced a complex volume. It includes the text of the poems, their translation into German, interpretative notes, and his meditations upon reading the poems.[21] In a certain sense, Rosenzweig succeeds in portraying the idea of the poem by its unique arrangement on the page, which conveys its inner language and tonality. This idea becomes clear when it is read aloud, and the reading enables the reader to go beyond the literal and uncover the meaning and the ideas that the poem contains. Here the uniqueness of the poem emerges again, because a large part of what interests Rosenzweig in poetry relates to its unique characteristics and the characteristics of religious poetry and religious expression, and invoking God's name.

The dramatic text

The second model is one of a dramatic text. When you hold a text of a drama, you can see a text that has been structured as a manual for performance. You read a text, but it is only a guide to revive the letters. To read drama as drama is to hear the voices and the sounds of the people in the texts.

The phenomenon I wish to demonstrate by an analysis of the first chapter of Genesis is not unique to this chapter, and it expresses the way in which Rosenzweig – together with his partner Buber – shaped the framework of the page. Here as well, we see that attention is paid to the manner of reading, the pauses, the breaths, the emphases. However, more than anything, I want to show this novel method of reading as a way of reading the biblical text.

The text below is taken from the German translation of the Bible by Buber and Rosenzweig. At first glance, it resembles the text of a drama or a play, and not a traditional Biblical text. It is not an artistic beautification of the Bible, or decoratively attaching crowns to the letters, but is presented as a dramatic text. A close reading of the text reveals its appearance. It is not divided into verses, as is usual in traditional manuscripts and printed texts from the 15th century. There is no indication of verse divisions but the text is divided in a way which enables it to be read as one would a play. The reader can feel the movement of speech in the

text, the transformation of the first verse into stage directions or a description of the initial situation. It also represents the transformation of Divine speech into the signals of a character in the play. What makes the translation even more unique is the attention paid to the verse, "And it was evening and it was morning, one day." In the printed version below, "one day" is not a description of the first day but a divine statement that calls the evening and the morning "one day." Even the punctuation, vocalization and colons that indicate direct address emphasize the unique nature of the text, which has been transformed from a text telling the story of Creation into one that dramatizes it.

Im Anfang

Im Anfang schuf Gott den Himmel und die Erde.

Und die Erde war Irrsal und Wirrsal
Finsternis uber Urwirbels Antlitz
Braus Gottes spreitend uber dem Antlitz der Wasser.
Da sprach Gott: Licht werde! Und Licht ward.
Und Gott sah das Licht, daß es gut war.
Da Gott schied dem Licht und der Finsternis
Gott rief dem Licht: Tag! und der Finsternis rief er:
Nacht.
Abend ward und Morgen ward: Ein Tag.

The design of the blessings

An additional model I would like to present is the intriguing model of prayers that create a figure of movement, or the movement of a geometric figure by means of the way the lines are structured. Two collections will be addressed, from familial and communal contexts: the Grace after Meals and Friday night prayers including the Grace after Meals.

The movement created on the page seems to be one of breathing, or the strengthening of the reading in keeping with the way that repeating the words strengthens the idea, as in the words of the Kaddish, *Yitgadal veyitkadash veyitpa'ar veyitromam* and the like.

Rosenzweig even highlights this strengthening by separating the connective conjunction *und* at the beginning of each word. He continues the emphasis on the words with the help of their inner-directed movement. The words are spread out from the right to the left side of the page towards the middle, as if each word succeeds in making an additional step towards the middle.

On the one hand, this type of arrangement can be seen as a way to raise the voice and pace one's breathing while reading poetry. On the other hand, it can be viewed as an enhanced emphasis on the visual aspects of the prayer, or prayer as poetry. Alternatively, one might attempt to decipher the figures Rosenzweig creates on the page.

Rosenzweig's *magnum opus* is called the *Star of Redemption*, and the structure of the book is reflected by its being a combination of two triangles. One triangle's base is on top and faces down, and the other's base is on the bottom and faces up. Rosenzweig structures the book in such a way that placing the two triangles upon one another creates the *star of redemption*, which is none other than the face of man. In this way, Rosenzweig inscribes a number of key points on the text so that additional triangles are created, the most prominent one being the end of the book, which indicates "to life."

Accordingly, it must be noted that the figures which accompany the translations of blessings are also triangles or arrows, some of which point to the right and others to the left. What did Rosenzweig mean by the direction of the arrows?

In place of a summary: the song of the Psalms

Is it too much to assume that the importance of religious poetry and the way in which it is designed by Rosenzweig touches upon the essence of the religious experience and revelation? This special form of writing suggests that is does, and teaches us that there is particular importance not only in the way in which poetry is read and studied, but also in the way that it is presented to the reader:

> So it is not prophecy that is the particular form where redemption can become the content of Revelation; rather this must be a form belonging entirely to Redemption, which consequently expresses the event not-yet-having-taken-place and yet still-to-come-one-day. But this is the form of the communal song of the community. The community is not, not yet, everyone; its We is still limited, it remains simultaneously bound to a You; but—yet—it claims to be everybody. This "yet" is the world of the Psalms. It makes the Psalms the songbook of the community, although they all express themselves in the form of the I. (Rosenzweig 2005, 268)

The primary focus of this essay was upon one of the most remarkable of Rosenzweig's endeavours, namely the graphic page design of his printed translations. This phenomenon was considered from a philosophical perspective, in keeping with his "new philosophic initiative," and not solely from an aesthetic or graphic standpoint.

Upon examining all of Rosenzweig's works, it becomes clear that this phenomenon does not characterize the entire body of his works, but only those writings that contain a ritual element – prayer or Torah reading. As a result, I have assessed the distinctive typography of Rosenzweig's printed works, and principally his translations of the Siddur, in a dialogic, educational, and cultural context. From this perspective, Rosenzweig's statements regarding the importance of prayer and the prayer book stand out distinctively. Not only does he accentuate his own personal interest in the Siddur, but he regards it as the most suitable textbook for instruction in Jewish schools, a conclusion which he implemented in practice in the Jewish Free *Lehrhaus*.

Following my assessment, it seems reasonable to differentiate between the different types of graphic design which give expression to the dialogic power of the written text: whether it be a text of a play, a poem, or even a figure that moderates breathing and dialogue between the reader and the written text. According to Rosenzweig, it turns out that not only can the text speak, but if it has a distinctive graphic design, it can even invite the reader to engage in an intimate dialogue.

Notes

1. Rosenzweig (2005), 263–264.
2. The significance of translation can be learned from the brief description offered by Buber in his essay "Translation of the Bible, Its Intentions and Methods" (Buber 1978). Buber describes the differences in approach between him and Rosenzweig and their different motives in translating the Bible into German.
3. On the importance of prayer for Rosenzweig see Yehoyada (2003), 29–64; Kepnes (2012) 519–537; Hoffman (2006), 938–945; Schwartz (1996), 163–175.

4. On the role of graphic design of the Siddur in mystical tradition see Kallus (2002).
5. Rosenzweig's comments relate to the statement of Hamann that "poetry is the mother tongue of the human race" (Glatzer 1998, 45). He continues: "But the child only becomes an adult when through his *Ursprache* there breaks the unlyrical or unmagical fullness of the word" … "The Bible is the fortress of human language in that it is prose."
6. Thanks to Cedric Cohen-Skalli. And see Martin Luther (1530); Besch (1999); MacKenzie (2004); Cohen Skalli (2014), 73–97 Cohen Skalli (2015): 499–527.
7. On the joint Buber-Rosenzweig translation project see Levi (2005), 301–327; Gillman (2002), 93–114; Batnitzky (2007): 131–143; Batnitzky (1997), 87–116; Niehoff (1993), 258–279; Fox (1971-1972): 29–42.
8. "The Secret of Biblical Narrative Form." In Buber and Rosenzweig (1994), 141.
9. Glatzer (1955). A new edition of this book was published in the series on "Modern Jewish Philosophy and Religion: Translations and Critical Studies," Elliot Wolfson and Barbara Galli (Series Editors), The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002, with an exchange of letters between Buber and Rosenzweig. Hugo Bergman wrote the following about the place of education in Rosenzweig's worldview:

   > Rosenzweig's interest in education is attested to by the essay he wrote in 1916 in Macedonia on the reform of German schools. At the same time, while still on the battlefield, Rosenzweig began collecting materials on the state of Jewish instruction in Germany and made plans to reform the face of education. (Bergman (1967), 288 [Hebrew].

   A review of his published essay reveals that a number of Rosenzweig's more important essays deal with education: In the famous letter he sent to his clandestine advisor Hermann Cohen he proposes a reform in the course of study for German Jews. The letter was published as an essay entitled "*Zeit ist*" (English translation: "It Is Time: Concerning the Study of Judaism," translated by Nahum N. Glatzer, 27–54, in Rosenzweig (2002 [1955]). At a later stage, he published "*Bildung und kein Ende*" (1920), (English translation: "Towards a Renaissance of Jewish Learning," op. cit. 55–71); which is his outline for the establishment of the *Freies Juedisches Lehrhaus*. The role of the free Beit Midrash was not only to create a place of learning and creativity but also to affect a real revolution for the renewal of Judaism, and perhaps even a renaissance. After the Beit Midrash opened, he described in "*Neues Lernen*" (1920) the way in which he wanted to create this revolutionary movement in which life leads into Torah.
10. The importance of Jewish education in Rosenzweig's life and thought cannot be over-emphasized. It preoccupies his thought, he writes about it, seeks to create a new educational programme for Jewish schools, and plans ways to prepare teachers for Jewish schools. His educational approach seeks to create a new type of Torah study, which he calls "a new sort of Torah Study" which "no longer starts with the Torah and leads into life, but the other way around: from life … back to the Torah." It may be possible to convey his ideas using terminology drawn from the works of Buber or Rabbi Soloveitchik on the difference between fate and destiny. See Prof. Gerald Blidstein's Hebrew addendum to his essay (1996), 168–174.
11. The issue of what should be the primary text of study in the Jewish world is not a new one, and is still relevant. It is still being actively debated is certain parts of the Jewish world, and at times it can be the defining element between the hassidic and the Lithuanian worlds, between Zionists and non-Zionists, and in the haredi world, between Ashkenazim and Sephardim. The text in contention can be the Mishna, Talmud, codes of law such as the Shulhan Arukh, hassidic and midrashic literature (such as the *Ein Yaakov),* and of course, Biblical literature. The quest for an understanding of Jewish history and historical processes is also a part of the renewed definitions of the Jewish world. One of the more interesting examples for comparison is the religious-Zionist attempt to redefine the Jerusalem Talmud – a classic produced in Israel – as the foundational text in the renewal of Judaism.
12. On the renewed status of the Bible see the comprehensive survey of Shapira (2005) [Hebrew].
13. Glatzer (1998), 251.

14. From an historical perspective, the siddur is the Jewish people's most self-renewing book, as illustrated by the Friday night *Kabbalat Shabbat* service introduced by Spanish exiles in the 16th century, to which Rosenzweig paid special attention.
15. The fascinating question of how the Bible became the foundational text of the Zionist movement is beyond the purview of this article. However, the name of David Ben-Gurion and his interest in the Bible should be noted.
16. Rosenzweig (1987), 294.
17. The translation of R. Yehudah Halevi's poetry was published in two editions (Rosenzweig 1983, 2000).
18. The Bible translation project, in collaboration with Buber, occupied Rosenzweig in his later years.

    On the Buber-Rosenzweig translation of the Bible into German see, for example Cohen (2012), 179–202; Gibbs (2004), 179–202; Kepnes (1996), 173–189; Kepnes (1993), 327–333; Freund (1996), 77–92.

    This project occupied him and his colleagues for the entire time of his illness, and even his final words were dedicated to the connection between the translation and his own life.
19. Rosenzweig translated the Sabbath prayers twice; It would be useful to see Scholem's reaction to this project (see ref. and footnote 5).
20. This translation is reported in Raphael Rosenzweig's introduction to the translation of Halevi's poetry, and he cites only one excerpt from this work, a translation of "Kol Nidrei."
21. On Halevi's poetry in Rosenzweig's works see Dreyfus (1978), 91–103; Starobinski-Safran (1994), 199–216; Galli (1994): 413–427; Galilli (2014), 153–172.

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Hanoch Ben-Pazi's research is dedicated to contemporary philosophy and modern Jewish thought, especially to the philosophical writings and Jewish thought of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas. Among his publications: *Interpretation as Ethical Act: The Hermeneutics of Emmanuel Levinas*, Tel Aviv: Resling (Series of Philosophy) 2012; *Emmanuel Levinas: Educational Contract: Responsibility, Hopefulness, Alliance*, Tel Aviv: Mofet and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2016.

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