Myriad® Hebrew

Presented by John D. Berry

Myriad Hebrew is an extension of Adobe's popular humanist sans serif typeface Myriad, bringing the same qualities of clarity and legibility to Hebrew text. Like the Latin design, Myriad Hebrew is one of the most extensive families of Hebrew typefaces available today, comprising twenty fonts in five weights and two widths, each with matching italics. Its large x-height, open counters, and sturdy, even stroke weight, with both upright and slanted versions, make it ideal for text as well as extensive display use. The principal consultant was Ronit Kohn.

Myriad • מיריאד עברית • Myriad Hebrew

אבגדהוזחטיכלמנסעפצקרשת
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0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Light • Regular • Semibold • Bold

Myriad: a neutral humanist sans

Myriad is a humanist sans serif typeface, with stems, counter shapes, and curves that suggest the influence of calligraphy. Its proportions are neutral, and its design is open and clear, making it highly readable in text and display sizes.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz & 1234567890
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ 1234567890

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz & 1234567890
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

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ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Myriad Latin & Hebrew

Myriad Hebrew is big news. Its Latin design is by Robert Slimbach, and it's a beauty. Its Hebrew design is by Ronit Kohn, and it's a beauty. Put them together, and you've got a beautiful pair. Slimbach's Latin design is a model of clarity and legibility, with a large x-height, open counters, and sturdy, even stroke weight. Kohn's Hebrew matches it perfectly, especially in modern typography. But Hebrew letters are very different from serif-less Latin letters, and Kohn's design is unique.

The challenge of designing Hebrew type for Myriad was to create a design that would be equally suitable for bold text and display or point size and on screen, and to make the typeface work well in combination with Myriad Latin. Kohn's design succeeds admirably on both counts.

Although the Hebrew alphabet shares its roots with the Latin alphabet and other Western and Middle Eastern alphabets, it has a unique history and character. Its letters are all basically square, and they are all consonants. Vowels are indicated by dots and dashes above, below, and within the consonants. Hebrew is written from right to left, and it has no capitals. Its letters are separated from one another, whereas written Arabic type is fully connected. Hebrew letters have a distinctive rhythm, with a pronounced vertical emphasis and a strong contrast between thick and thin strokes. Kohn's design for Myriad Hebrew is based on the calligraphic pen strokes that are characteristic of Hebrew letterforms, but it also has a modern look and feel. Like the Latin alphabet, it has roots in the style of Renaissance humanist writing, but it has been updated to suit the tastes of the twenty-first century.

"The Hebrew typeface I was looking for couldn't look Muslim-leaning, but it has to remain Hebrew," Slimbach explains. "Ronit's design is a beautiful example of how to make Hebrew letters that can be appropriate for classic international texts and commercial literature. He achieved the goal of making Hebrew letters that look Hebrew, but that are also neutral enough to work with Latin letters in harmony."

Matching sizes

Myriad Latin and Hebrew were especially appropriate for international design and commerce," says Kohn. "In the preparation of the two fonts, matching x-height was one of the most important issues."

ירושלים
القدس (ورزيز)
Jerusalem

The obvious design problem for Myriad Hebrew was how big should the letters be? Since Hebrew letters are all square, they appear larger than Latin letters of the same point size. Should it be matched? That would make the Hebrew appear to shout, in a mixed range. Should the Hebrew be smaller? That would make it look timid and unreadable in comparison to the Latin. Kohn's solution was to make the Hebrew letters a little smaller than the Latin, but not as small as one in the Latin alphabet, so that the Hebrew letters look balanced in a mixed range.

Numbers

Like the alphabet, the numbers in Western texts, especially old-style typefaces, the numerals have a humanist character. Hebrew numbers are based on the letters of the alphabet, and they are written from right to left. Myriad Hebrew includes both Western and Hebrew numbers, so that it can be used in an international context, as in this sample Hebrew text.

Myriad Hebrew

This is what Slimbach has to say about the Hebrew typeface he designed for Myriad:

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Myriad Hebrew includes both Western and Hebrew numbers, so that it can be used in an international context, as in this sample Hebrew text.

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