

'WE ARE A UNIQUE PEOPLE, UNLIKE ANY OTHER'
THE DISCRETE PERCEPTION
AS REFLECTED IN SCHOOL ANTHOLOGIES

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Abstract

This article examines how the concept of the Chosen People is reflected in the literary works that comprise school anthologies of the Haredi Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Sector in Israel. The concept of the Jewish People being the Chosen People entails a Discrete Perception that is not always noticeable at first glance. It is, however, indicated and revealed through the semantic-linguistic tools that are provided by Cognitive Semantics. In turn, these shed light on the conceptual arrangement of the semantic fields that comprise the concept of the Chosen People. The complex model of national identity that was developed in a previous study exposes three different types of the Discrete Perception – religious, ethnic, and territorial aspects – and the relationship between the three. The findings of this study reveal a polarization between the group of affiliation and the 'other' at both the revealed and concealed levels of the text. This polarization is reflected through a number of aspects, from discrete terms that differentiate between The People and Gentile, through the characteristics that are attributed to the Jewish People compared to other nations, to the abstract semantic fields that create polarization between up and down, between light and darkness. In this manner, a mental map is formed to emphasize the importance of the Jewish Collective and the strength of the Jewish People as a group, that differs greatly from the weakness of the individual.