

Liebhaber Prize for Religious Tolerance

The annual Rabbi Marc and Dr. Henia Liebhaber Prize (NIS 100,000) will be awarded to an individual for significant achievements in

The Encouragement of Religious Tolerance and Cultural Pluralism in the State of Israel

Nominations should be submitted to the Prize Committee by **July 24th, 2009 (3 AV 5769)**

Nomination forms are available from:
P.O.B. 16080, Jerusalem 91160
Tel. 074-7800681, Fax. 02-6791453
Email: navah@schechter.ac.il



מכון שכטר למדעי היהדות
Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies
www.schechter.edu

Marc and Henia Liebhaber Prize
for the Promotion of Religious Tolerance
and Cultural Pluralism in Israel 2008 (5769)

The Liebhaber Prize was established by Rabbi Marc and Dr. Henia to promote religious tolerance and cultural pluralism in the State of Israel.

The prize is awarded for a significant contribution toward the tangible achievement of religious pluralism and tolerance in Israel. The candidate must exhibit a personal commitment to democratic principles and tolerance, integrated with basic Jewish values and ethics.

The recipient is to be chosen by a public committee that will judiciously review all recommendations.

The amount of the prize is 100,000 NIS.

The members of the 5769 jury are:

Prof. David Golinkin, Chair, President, Schechter Institute

Prof. Alice Shalvi, 2007 Israel Prize; Schechter Institute Executive Committee
Prof. Daniel Sperber, 1992 Israel Prize Laureate; President, Institute for Advanced Torah Studies, Bar Ilan University
Ya'akov Tsur, Chair, Schechter Institute Executive Committee; Chair, Agrexco Agricultural Export Co.

Rabbi Marc N. Liebhaber, a respected and well known leader of the North American Jewish community, is former President of the World Council of Conservative/Masorti Synagogues (Masorti Olami) and Rabbi Emeritus of B'nai Emet Synagogue in St. Louis Park, MN, where he held a pulpit for many years. He and his wife, Henia, a retired physician, are active supporters of promoting Jewish tolerance and pluralism in the State of Israel.

Past Prize Recipients

Rabbi Michael Melchior, 2007 recipient, an active member of the Knesset since 1999, and today Chairman of its Education Committee, works to bring the disparate groups of Israeli society together through dialogue and joint action. As part of these efforts, he established the *Yachad* (Together) Council which works toward improving relations between Israel's ultra-Orthodox, religious and secular populations as well as the *Meitarim* school system for religious and secular pupils and *Beyachad* (in union) which offers holiday prayer and study sessions outside of the synagogue to secular communities.

Deborah Goldman Golan, 2006 recipient, is Director of the Bamidbar Center in Yeroham, a creative Bet Midrash operating in Israel's south since 1990. Serving over 1500 residents of all ages, religious streams and ethnic groups, the Center is a major force in the region in promoting Jewish knowledge based on egalitarian and pluralistic principles.

Ruth Lehavi, 2005 recipient, is founder of the Keshet School in Jerusalem and today principal of its high school. Establishing the school twelve years ago, Lehavi's pioneering enterprise reflects one of the only attempts to bring religious and non-religious pupils of all ages together in one school framework.

Osnat Elnatan, 2004 recipient, is a senior director for employment programs for special needs populations at the JDC (Joint) Israel and founding Director of *Kehilah*, a community-based social action organization located in Bet Shemesh.

Judith Edelman-Green, 2003 recipient, is founding director of the B'nai Mitzvah program for children with special needs, which she directed from 1995-2004,

together with the Masorti Movement. Today she is involved in establishing Kfar Rimon, a village for adults with special needs in Kfar Sava.

Dr. Gili Zivan and Sharon Leshem-Zinger, 2002 recipients, have established a network of community study programs where religious and secular Israeli Jews study together Jewish texts. Dr. Gili Zivan is Executive Director of the Ya'acov Herzog Center for Jewish Studies and Sharon Leshem-Zinger is Educational Director of the Kolot BaNegev Institute.

Dr. Aryeh Geiger, 2001 recipient, is the founding principal of the Reut School in Jerusalem. As school principal, he succeeded in fostering religious tolerance among his students through a school curriculum that emphasizes a respect for all streams of Judaism.

Rabbi Roberto Arbib, 2000 recipient, director of the Masorti Movement's *Midreshet Iyun* Learning Center and Rabbi of *Kehilat Sinai*, has created a vibrant center for Jewish learning in the heart of Tel Aviv. Rabbi Arbib is also involved in promoting ecumenical dialogue amongst Jews and Muslims.

Shai Zarchi, 1999 recipient, a founding member of the Midrasha at Oranim, today teaches Judaism and Hebrew Literature and directs the Tehuda Bet Midrash for Jewish Leadership.

Bambi Sheleg, 1998 recipient, is a journalist and editor of *Eretz Acheret* ("A Different Israel"), a magazine dedicated to promoting Israeli and Jewish discourse on issues of society and identity.

Hoshaya Friedman Ben Shalom, 1997 recipient, founder of Jerusalem's urban kibbutz "Bet Israel," comprised of both religious and secular Israeli families, and an army preparatory program for youth within the "Bet Israel" community.

Liebhaber Prize Recipient for 2008 (5759) Muki (Shmuel) Tsur

The Marc and Henia Liebhaber Prize for the promotion of Religious Tolerance and Cultural Pluralism in Israel for the year 2008- 5759 is awarded to Muki Tsur, educator, writer and historian.

Muki Tsur, member of Kibbutz Ein Gev, teacher and philosopher, student of Gershom Scholem and Nathan Rotenstreich, is an outstanding example of a personal commitment to openness, tolerance and the values of democracy as reflected in the fundamental values of Judaism.

His work in Jewish Thought and teaching over several decades has been directed at bridging the fault-lines of religious polarization that have threatened Israeli society:

religious versus secular, atheists versus believers. Long before “Jewish literacy” and the opening of *Batei Midrash* for joint study became fashionable, Muki trudged from city to city and village to village, knocked on the gates, and in his characteristically quiet, yet persuasive manner, presented a one-man Bet Midrash reflecting his core values of tolerance and openness.

He is one of the great crafters of the culture of “attentiveness and dialogue,” of “eliciting and listening.” Perhaps the most significant example is his book *Siach Lochamim*, a collection of interviews with soldiers returned from the battles of the Six Day, translated . It is a humanist dialogue, expressing deeply sensitive [*The Seventh Day*](#) into English as observations on the outcome of the war and its impact on an entire generation.

In all his educational enterprises - the Kibbutz Movement’s literary journal, *Shdemot*, and its *Batei Midrash* in Oranim and Efal; the pre-army preparatory programs; missions to the Diaspora; prolific publications – Muki has succeeded in portraying the synergy of continuity that abides within the Zionist revolution. He has proven that Hebrew culture, fashioned in Israel by the children of the second and third Aliyah, signified both an innovation and a continuation of Jewish civilization. This dialogue between past and present reflected a culture that did not revoke its past but felt free to reinterpret it, seeking a common ground with the present. Muki’s powerful storytelling ability and his winning but modest personality helped him nurture generations of students and counselors who have continued to follow in his footsteps.

Muki has brought about a sea change in the arena of Jewish/Israeli dialogue. The “Jewish Library” has taken on new meaning for a wider audience not necessarily committed to religious observance. Secularists and religious, descendants of the different Israeli “tribes,” learn together as equals, debating the fundamentals of Jewish/Israeli identity in mutual respect and consideration. They do this without apologetics and without confrontation, recognizing the importance of tradition no matter how each one interprets it.

With total conviction, Muki believes that this discourse is critical to the State of Israel both for shaping a Jewish worldview that is open, liberal and humanist, as well as for maintaining a shared social-national consciousness.