

Marc and Henia Liebhaber Prize for the Promotion of Religious Tolerance and Cultural Pluralism in Israel

The Liebhaber Prize was established by Rabbi Marc and Dr. Henia z"l Liebhaber 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 5770 jury are:

Prof. David Golinkin, Chair, President, Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies

Prof. Daniel Sperber, 1992 Israel Prize Laureate; President, Institute for Advanced Torah Studies, Bar Ilan University

Mr. Ya'akov Tsur, Chair, Schechter Institute Executive Committee; Chair, Agrexco Agricultural Export Co.

Rabbi Marc N. Liebhaber, a values 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 beloved wife Henia, a respected physician who passed away recently, established the prize in 1996 as an expression of their deep commitment to promoting Jewish tolerance and pluralism in Israel.

For further information on the prize contact atalia@schechter.ac.il

Liebhaber Prize Recipients for 2009 (5770): Shlomo Gronich and Jacky (Ya'akov) Levy

The Marc and Henia Liebhaber Prize for the Promotion of Religious Tolerance and Cultural Pluralism in Israel for 2009 was awarded to Mr. Shlomo Gronich, composer, singer and conductor; and to Mr. Jacky (Ya'akov) Levy, artist and media personality.

Shlomo Gronich



Shlomo Gronich, performing at the ceremony of the 13th annual Liebhaber Prize for Religious Tolerance in Jerusalem, December 2009

Shlomo Gronich, a musician since early childhood, comes by his talents naturally. His father, Aaron, was a music teacher, a wind instrument musician, and the first conductor of the IDF orchestra. In the army, Shlomo played the keyboard and composed music for military bands. He completed his studies at the Music Academy in Tel Aviv and studied composition at the Mannes College The New School for Music in New York.

The musical education of Shlomo Gronich, together with a rare talent, transformed the artist into a virtuosic composer and performer. Shlomo has worked with the best songwriters and composers of Israeli music and has produced numerous recordings that have entered the annals of Israeli music.

Shlomo's search for his Jewish identity resonates throughout his works. He composes contemporary Israeli

music steeped in ancient Jewish melodies from the diaspora. His songs speak of love, peace, the obligation to act justly, tolerance, a faith in the future and the vision of the Biblical prophets.

His work with the Sheva Choir, which is composed of children who immigrated to Israel from Ethiopia, is especially noteworthy. This Zionist enterprise covered the world with love. Moreover, his show, entitled "A Journey to Jewish Roots," presents a loving and tolerant Judaism to a broad audience.

Shlomo plays the music of dialogue. He speaks with his listeners, communicating Jewish openness in an age of polarization and isolation. He captivates his audience with the belief that a melody can over-come differences, that lyrics can educate toward Jewish unity in Israel and throughout the world.



Prof. David Golinkin, President of the Schechter Institute presents Shlomo Gronich with the Liebhaber Prize.

Jacky Levy



Jacky Levy humors the audience at the Liebhaber Prize ceremony.

Jacky Levy was raised in a traditional Mizrahi household. Educated in the spirit of religious Zionism, he attended the Kfar HaRoeh High School Yeshiva and the Kibbutz Ein Tsurim Yeshiva. Mr. Levy studied Philosophy and Theatre at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and subsequently taught theatre at the university and at other institutions.

An artist and a well-known media personality, Jackie Levy has succeeded in bridging the gap among various groups in Israel: the secular, traditional and religious; right and left wing; Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews; new immigrants and native-born Israelis; young and old.

On stage and in the media, as a moderator and commentator, Jacky succeeds in reaching audiences not as a representative of a certain party or ideology, but rather as an "ambassador" of Judaism. This achievement is due to his

unique ability to understand varied cultures and lifestyles, and his deep faith in true dialogue as a way of life.

Jacky's wise and insightful humor, a reflection of his rich Jewish background, is refreshing and innovative. He reminds his Israeli audiences of the unbreakable link between Judaism and the Jewish people: just as Judaism is a wellspring from which they are not to let go, so too Judaism cannot forsake its people. The entertainer possesses an ability to persuade audiences to listen to opposing positions, to develop empathy and deepen mutual respect.

Jacky has the courage to be true to himself and the rare ability to demand from his audience the same. His sharp eye lets us look at ourselves and understand how much we need one another.



Prof. David Golinkin presents Jacky Levy with the Liebhaber Prize.

Past Prize Recipients

Muki Tsur, 2008 recipient, is an educator, writer and historian. Tsur's contributions to Israeli life and culture have consistently been grounded in a personal commitment to openness, tolerance and democracy as reflected in the fundamental values of Judaism. From the Kibbutz Movement's literary journal, *Shdemot*, to its *Batei Midrash* in Oranim and Efal; pre-army preparatory programs and his prolific publications, Tsur's educational model depicts the Zionist revolution, Hebrew culture and Jewish civilization as one unbreakable continuum.

Rabbi Michael Melchior, 2007 recipient, is an Israeli public figure and politician who has devoted his life to working to bring the disparate groups of Israeli society together through dialogue and joint action. A former Knesset member and leader of the left-wing religious Zionist party, Meimad, Melchior has established a number of non-profit organizations that work toward improving relations between Israel's ultra-Orthodox, religious and secular populations.

Deborah Goldman Golan, 2006 recipient, is Director of the Bamidbar Center in Yeroham, a creative Bet Midrash operating in Israel's south since 1990. The Center is a major force in the region in promoting Jewish knowledge based on egalitarian and plu-ralistic principles.

Ruth Lehavi, 2005 recipient, is founding principal of the Keshet School in Jerusalem, a unique educational model which brings religious and non-religious pupils of all ages together in one school framework. Today, she directs a leadership program for principals at the David Yellin Teacher's College in Jerusalem.

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 Director of the Kolot BaNegev's School for Facilitators of Multi-Cultural Groups.

Dr. Aryeh Geiger z"l, 2001 recipient, a visionary educator, was the founding principal of the Reut School in Jerusalem which fosters religious tolerance among its students.

Rabbi Roberto Arbib, 2000 recipient, is director of the Masorti Movement's Midreshet Iyun Learning Center and Rabbi of Kehilat Sinai, both vibrant centers for Jewish learning in the heart of Tel Aviv. He will head the new Schechter Center for Jewish Culture in Neve Zedek, opening Fall 2010.

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, is the 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.