

THE 49TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL BIBLE CONTEST FOR JEWISH YOUTH

JOSHUA J. ADLER

Although there were only 53 contestants (down from the usual 60) from just 22 countries (down from the usual 30 plus countries), there was still much excitement in the air at the annual International Bible Contest for Jewish Youth. In the contest for young people from overseas there was actually a tie for the top spot. Akiva Abramowitz, from the Yeshivah of Flatbush in Brooklyn, had the same number of points as Aaron Goldberg of Toronto, Canada. The decision was made to have both declared winners and given the title of champion.

At the main contest, held annually on Israel Independence Day, Gideon Sa'ar, the Minister of Education, announced that 12,600 pupils in Israel participated this year in the various Bible contests around the country, the highest number ever from the Israeli school system. The winner of these internal Israeli contests was Avshalom Adler (not a relative of mine).

The main contest had 12 pupils from the Diaspora and four from Israel. This culminated in a tie between the American Akiva Abramowitz and the Israeli Elchanan Bloch. In contrast to what occurred in the Diaspora youth event held four days earlier, this time the judges decided to hold an additional set of quick-fire Bible questions from which the international champion would emerge. This special round of questions was won by the Israeli contestant, Elchanan Bloch of Netivot, who studied at the yeshivah in Yeruham.

The theme of this year's *Hidon Ha-Tanakh* was social justice, based on the statement of the prophet Micah (Micah 6:8), and it was the subject of many of the questions as well as various short films which dealt with individuals and groups involved in helping the more unfortunate people of our society. There were also speeches on the theme by IDF Chief Education Officer Brigadier General Eli Shermeister, Minister of Education Gideon Sa'ar and the Chairman of the Jewish Agency, Natan Sharansky.

The contest, which was, as usual, televised live from the Jerusalem Theatre, concluded with various presentations to the contestants who came in second

Joshua J. Adler, formerly Rabbi of Chizuk Emuna Congregation in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, has lived in Jerusalem since 1972, and serves as managing editor of The Jewish Bible Quarterly.

and third and with a Bar Ilan University scholarship for the international champion, Elchanan Bloch. Praise was also expressed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for all those taking part in the *Hidon*.

Jewish communities around the world are urged to prepare pupils for local Bible contests, wherever they are held, or to have pupils trained privately so that they can be future participants in the International Bible Contest. Pupils may study the Bible in Hebrew and other languages, since there are translators available here for every language spoken by the contestants. For further information about the annual *Hidon* for youth, contact your local Jewish Agency representative and /or write to us at www.jafi.org.il.



WE WELCOME ARTICLES ON THE FOLLOWING BOOKS OF TANAKH:

KINGS
ISAIAH
JEREMIAH
MICAH
AMOS
JOEL
HAGGAI
HABAKKUK
PSALMS
PROVERBS
CHRONICLES

