

THE 55th INTERNATIONAL BIBLE CONTEST FOR JEWISH YOUTH 5778

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The 55th annual International Bible Contest for Jewish Youth (*Hidon ha-Tanakh*) took place in Jerusalem on Israel Independence Day with the participation of young contestants from a number of countries and 4 from Israel who scored highest in the local Bible contest for Israelis. Ezriel Shilat, 16, a resident of Hatzor Haglilit in the north and a yeshiva student at Shomria in the south, took the title in the final round on Thursday, Israel's Independence Day, in Jerusalem. He was among the settlers removed in 2005 from the Gaza Strip when Israel withdrew. The runner-up was Oriah Cohen, a student at the B'nei Akivah girls' high school in Kiryat Motzkin, a suburb of Haifa, and a resident of Haifa. Shilat and Cohen were among four Israelis to reach the final round of 16 along with three Americans and Mexicans, two Australians and South Africans, and one each from Panama and Argentina. Israelis typically win the quiz, although a Canadian won in 2014 and an American tied with an Israeli in 2013.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was on hand for the competition held annually on Independence Day. This year the nation is celebrating its 70th anniversary.

The classic Bible contest traditions were maintained. In the first round of the contest every one of the sixteen contestants are asked a question via short educational films, a procedure which has been the practice now for several years. Also, as every year, before the contest itself all the contestants are given tours of the country to sites connected with the Bible, a day on an army base and visits with various government leaders such as the Prime Minister, Education Minister, and President Reuven Rivlin.

The annual *Hidon* is sponsored by several organizations including the government's Education Department, the IDF, the Jewish National Fund (*Keren Kayemet*) and the Jewish Agency. Jewish communities around the world are urged to prepare pupils for local Bible contests in communities where

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they are held or to prepare pupils privately so that they can become future participants in

the international *Hidon*. Pupils may study the Bible either in Hebrew or in their native languages. During the written exam in Israel and at the Independence Day contest there are always translators for anyone speaking a language other than Hebrew. For further information about the contest contact a Jewish Agency representative at www.jafi.org



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