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# THE AVI CHAI PRIZE IN ISRAEL - 5753

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## THE AVI CHAI PRIZE IN ISRAEL — 5753

The AVI CHAI Prize is being awarded for the first time this year, and is expected to become an annual tradition. The Prize is awarded to recognize significant contributions towards increasing mutual understanding and sensitivity among Jews of different backgrounds and commitments to religious observance in Israel.

The Prize may be conferred on any resident of Israel (not an institution, organization, or any other public body) who has made a significant, ongoing or innovative contribution to creating a bridge between Jews with different approaches to tradition, and whose activities stem from an approach of understanding and appreciation for the various facets of the Jewish heritage.

The Selection Committee is composed of seven persons of public stature in Israeli society, who represent a broad spectrum of approaches to Jewish tradition.

The AVI CHAI Prize in Israel — 5753 is in the amount of NIS 50,000.

### SELECTION COMMITTEE

Dr. Carmi Yogev, Chairman  
*Educator; Chairman of the Board of the Center for Educational Technology*

Rabbi Yehuda Leon Askenazi  
*Rabbi and Educator; founder of Ya'ir Center for the study of Judaism and Zionism; recipient of the Speaker of the Knesset Prize*

Rochelle Furstenberg  
*Journalist, contributing editor, The Jerusalem Report.*

Gurion Meltzer  
*Industrialist; President and Chief Executive Officer, Tadiran*

Victor Shem-Tov  
*Former Minister of Health and Member of Knesset*

Prof. Uriel Simon  
*Professor of Bible, Bar-Ilan University*

Prof. David W. Weiss  
*Professor of Medicine, Hebrew University - Hadassah Medical School, Jerusalem; member, Board of Trustees of AVI CHAI*

# AVI CHAI — A COMMITMENT TO JEWISH TRADITION AND TO THE CONTINUITY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

AVI CHAI is a New York-based private foundation established in 1984 which functions in the United States, and in Israel through its affiliate, Keren Aviad. Eventually AVI CHAI hopes to be active in all regions with major Jewish populations.

Whereas we are committed to the perpetuation of the Jewish people, Judaism and the centrality of the State of Israel to the Jewish people, the objectives of AVI CHAI are simply stated:

1. To encourage mutual understanding and sensitivity among Jews of different religious backgrounds and commitments to observance.
2. To encourage those of the Jewish faith towards greater commitment to Jewish observance and lifestyle by increasing their understanding, appreciation, and practice of Jewish traditions, customs and laws.

AVI CHAI adheres to the philosophy of Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, zt'l, Chief Rabbi of Israel from 1921–1935, in drawing guidance concerning criteria for projects designed to further AVI CHAI's objectives.

Among its activities in Israel, AVI CHAI supports the Center for Educational Technology (CET) in its development of curricular projects in Jewish heritage in the State School system, and has funded the initial phase of a revised program for the training of teachers at Oranim, the School of Education of the Kibbutz Movement. AVI CHAI also supports programs of Elul, which engage adults and youth with differing commitments to observance in the joint study of Jewish sources.

The findings of a research study by The Louis Guttman Israel Institute of Applied Social Research, commissioned by the Foundation, on the subject of "Beliefs, Observances and Social Interaction Among Israeli Jews" will be published this summer. Among the Foundation's publications are *Religious and Secular: Conflict and Accommodation between Jews in Israel*, and *The World of Rav Kook's Thought*.

Other activities of the Foundation in recent years include funding toward the establishment of Beit Morasha of Jerusalem, an institute of higher learning to train spiritual leaders for public service in education and communal institutions; a pre-marital program for young couples conceived and directed by Amiad; a program of the Yaacov Herzog Teachers Institute to train teachers and leaders for Russian-speaking immigrants; and placement and on-going support services for rabbis and teachers from the Mevasert Zion Educational Center.

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THE AVI CHAI PRIZE IN ISRAEL — 5753  
to  
DR. DANIEL TROPPER

**the initiator and founder of GESHER, which conducts programs to encourage understanding among Jews of varied religious backgrounds and to intensify Jewish identity**

Dr. Daniel Tropper was born in 1942 in New York City. In 1967 he received his rabbinic ordination from the late Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, zt"l, at Yeshiva University. In 1969 he made aliyah to Israel.

In 1970 he received a Ph.D in Jewish History from Yeshiva University. In the same year Dr. Tropper founded GESHER. In 1978 Dr. Tropper was appointed consultant of Jewish education by the former Minister of Education and Culture, Zevulun Hammer.

In 1981 he established the Department for Strengthening Jewish Education in the Ministry of Education and Culture, and served as its director until 1984. Today he acts as an advisor to the Board of Directors of The Pincus Fund for Jewish Education in the Diaspora.

Dr. Tropper serves as Chairman of GESHER.

## SELECTION OF THE RECIPIENT

*The AVI CHAI Prize in Israel — 5753 is being awarded to Dr. Daniel Tropper for his significant contribution in establishing GESHER, in order to further the unity of the Jewish people and the strengthening of Jewish identity.*

*Since its founding in 1970, GESHER has hosted joint meetings for youth from different schools throughout the country, who represent varied perspectives. These meetings are held in a mutually respectful and open atmosphere, with a warmth and kinship which encourages the students to discuss Jewish and social issues through a desire to understand and appreciate one another. Each meeting lasts three days, including a Shabbat.*

*Dr. Tropper has conducted these meetings for over 20 years, despite numerous difficulties and opposition. In order to hold these meetings, he has had to convince principals, teachers, pupils and parents of the importance of these sessions.*

*Prof. Ephraim Katzir, fourth President of Israel, wrote about Dr. Tropper and GESHER, "I have watched the GESHER movement closely. I have been deeply impressed by the meetings between religious and secular youth, and from the open and substantive discussions about the importance of Jewish tradition on the one hand, and modern culture — with its achievements and failures — on the other. The lectures that*

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*GESHER sponsors and the movement's publications are also important factors in fostering harmony between religious and secular Jews, and in educating people to be tolerant and to work together."*

*Besides his activities in GESHER, Dr. Tropper was one of the founders of the Joint Program for Jewish Education in the Diaspora, established by the Jewish Agency and the Ministry of Education and Culture, and was its first director, from 1981-84.*

*Dr. Tropper gives lectures in many schools and army bases on the subject of Jewish identity, and has a deep public commitment which is expressed through numerous articles on topics aimed at forming a bridge between those with different beliefs and approaches in Israeli society. Dr. Tropper, an observant Jew, is personable, exemplifies Jewish values, and has a comprehensive education.*

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