

NEWSLETTER

Issue number 1

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Dear Friends,

We are delighted to present to you the recent activities of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

We have dedicated the year 2018 to Israel's scientific and scholarly achievements in the seventy years since the establishment of the State. This activity culminated in the Grand Challenges in Chemistry conference at the Academy, and outside of it in the conference of Nobel laureates and Fields Medalists at the French Academy of Sciences in Paris, where the achievements of Israeli science were exhibited in their full glory.

The Academy's activity is an outgrowth of productive collaboration between the Academy, its sister Academies and major research enterprises throughout the world based on the commitment and devotion of its members, the Academy's Council and the entire excellent staff.

We would love to hear your comments, suggestions, and ideas for promoting the mission we all share – strengthening research and higher education in Israel and throughout the world, while contributing to our culture and common welfare.

Nili Cohen

Sincerely,

Nili

Academy President and Vice President Re-elected; New Academy Members Elected

The Academy's General Assembly, at its closed meeting in June, elected Prof. Nili Cohen for a second term as Academy President and Prof. David Harel for a second term as Vice President.

In addition, the Assembly elected four new members, bringing the membership to 128:

Prof. Naama Barkai

Department of Molecular Genetics, Weizmann Institute of Science



Prof. Simon Hopkins

Department of Arabic Language and Literature, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem



Prof. Adiel Stern

Department of Condensed Matter Physics, Weizmann Institute of Science

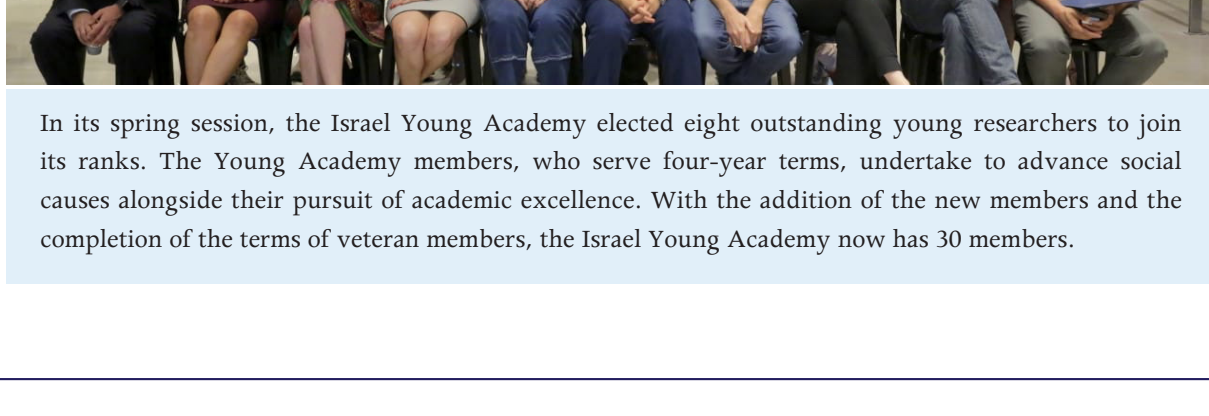


Prof. Micha Sharir

School of Computer Science, Tel Aviv University

The induction of new members will be celebrated at the General Assembly's open meeting on December 4 2018 at the Academy in Jerusalem.

Eight New Members Elected to the Israel Young Academy



In its spring session, the Israel Young Academy elected eight outstanding young researchers to join its ranks. The Young Academy members, who serve four-year terms, undertake to advance social causes alongside their pursuit of academic excellence. With the addition of the new members and the completion of the terms of veteran members, the Israel Young Academy now has 30 members.

International and Local Initiatives Celebrating the 70th Birthday of the State of Israel

The Grand Challenges in the Chemical Sciences conference

Convened at the Academy in early June, featuring presentations by over 50 scientists, including Nobel laureates, from Israel and around the world, The Grand Challenges in the Chemical Sciences conference, was one of the highlights of the Academy's celebrations of Israel's seventieth year.

The Conference of Nobel Laureates and Fields Medalists from Israel and France held at the French Academy

In mid-June another highlight of the 70th birthday year took place, at the initiative of Prof. Catherine Bréchignac, Secrétaire Perpetuel of the French Academy of Sciences and the Israel Academy President. The two agreed to convene joint scientific conferences in Paris and in Israel in honor of Israel's seventieth year. The conference in Paris included presentations by Nobel laureates and Fields Medalists. Other leading scientists from both academics, as well as about 75 high school students, attended. The conference in Israel is scheduled for November 2018.

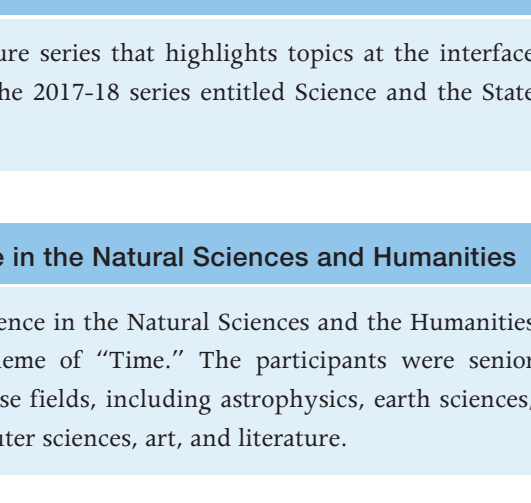


Scholarly and Scientific Development in Israel's Seventy Years

A multidisciplinary conference took place in April to mark seventy years of science and research in Israel. Examining the broad range of scientific inquiry from a critical perspective, the conference highlighted past research developments and scientific discoveries and offered projections of future accomplishments.

At the President's Residence: Exploring Paths to Science and Knowledge Careers

As part of its celebrations of Israel's seventieth year, the Academy initiated a meeting at the Presidential Residence with 150 teenagers from all over the country representing the diversity of Israeli society: Jews and Arabs, religious and secular, as well as a group of disabled teenagers who attend special education programs. Nobel Laureate and Academy Member Prof. Dan Shechtman, and Young Academy Member Prof. Mona Khoury-Kassabri described to the students their paths in research and engaged them in discussion. The President of Israel, Mr. Reuven (Ruvi) Rivlin, participated in the event, along with Academy President Prof. Nili Cohen.



The 2018 Albert Einstein Memorial Lecture



In March, Prof. David Reitze of the University of Florida and the California Institute of Technology and Executive Director of the LIGO (Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory) laboratory delivered the annual Albert Einstein Memorial Lecture on "LIGO: Revealing the Violent and Extremely Relativistic Universe through Gravitational Waves." Academy Member Prof. Itamar Willner, Chair of the Academy's Sciences Division, heads the Einstein Lecture Series Committee.

The 2018 Martin Buber Memorial Lecture

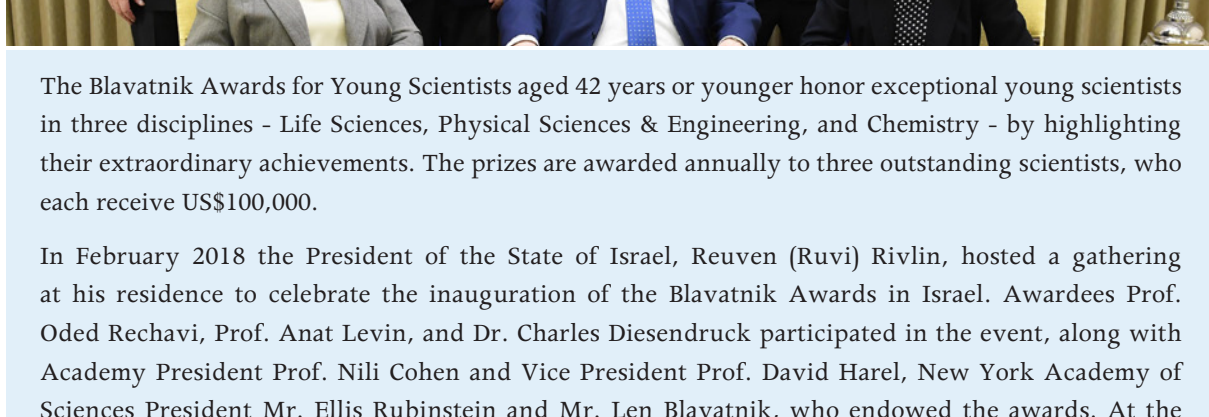
In May, Prof. Michael Cook of Princeton University presented the annual Martin Buber Memorial Lecture on "The Spread of Islam around the Indian Ocean." Prof. Cook, recipient of the Holberg Prize, is among today's leading scholars of Islam. Academy Member Prof. Yosef Kaplan, Chair of the Academy's Humanities Division, heads the Buber Lecture Series Committee.

International Darwin Day

The Israel Academy marked Darwin's birthday, February 12, with a conference celebrating Darwin's contribution to the world of science, scientific thought, and the promotion of intellectual courage, curiosity, and critical thought. The conference, on "Evolution of the Human Brain – How, Why, and When?" attracted a fascinated audience of university and high-school students as well as members of the general public.

Prizes and Fellowships

The 2018 Blavatnik Awards



The Blavatnik Awards for Young Scientists aged 42 years or younger honor exceptional young scientists in three disciplines - Life Sciences, Physical Sciences & Engineering, and Chemistry - by highlighting their extraordinary achievements. The prizes are awarded annually to three outstanding scientists, who each receive US\$100,000.

In February 2018 the President of the State of Israel, Reuven (Ruvi) Rivlin, hosted a gathering at his residence to celebrate the inauguration of the Blavatnik Awards in Israel. Awardees Prof. Oded Rechavi, Prof. Anat Levin, and Dr. Charles Diesendruck participated in the event, along with Academy President Prof. Nili Cohen and Vice President Prof. David Harel, New York Observatory of Sciences President Mr. Ellis Rubinstein and Mr. Len Blavatnik, who endowed the awards. At the awards ceremony, held at the Israel Museum, the keynote address was given by Nobel laureate, Academy Member Prof. Aaron Ciechanover.

The Adams Fellowships

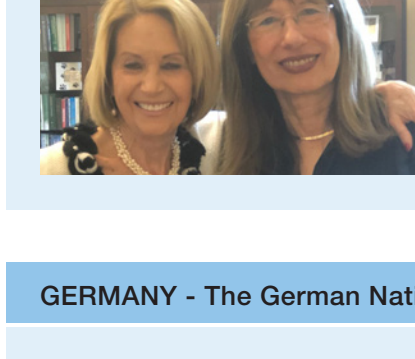
In 2005, recognizing the pivotal significance of world-class science for Israel's growth, security, and well-being, Mr. Marcel Adams, founder and Chairman of Iberville Developments, Ltd. (Canada), established the Adams Fellows Program for nurturing the highest echelon of young scientific researchers in Israel at the PhD studies level.

In June Adams Fellowships were granted to eight outstanding doctoral students at a festive annual ceremony held at the Academy.

Postdoctoral Fellowships for Foreign Researchers in Israel

The Israel Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships program, launched in 2018, aims to attract young, top-of-the-line researchers from around the world to join Israel's research laboratories. Up to ten two-year postdoctoral fellowships may be awarded annually to foreign researchers in the natural sciences, the exact sciences, medicine, the life sciences and engineering. Candidates must be no more than 33 years old at the time of their application and may not hold Israeli citizenship. Winners of the first round of fellowships come from China, Italy, France, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

The Gershom Scholem Prize for Kabbalah Research

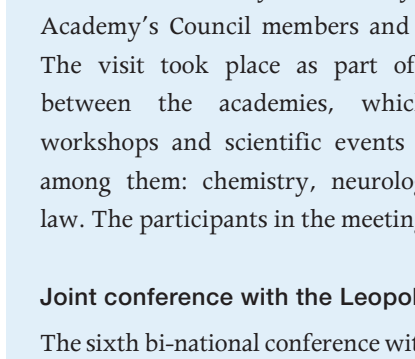


An Academy committee headed by Prof. Yosef Kaplan, Chairperson of the Humanities Division, selected Prof. Hava Pedaya as the recipient of the Gershom Scholem Prize for Kabbalah Research. Awarded once every four years, the prize perpetuates the memory of Gershom Scholem, the Academy's third president and a towering scholar of Kabbalah and mysticism. Prof. Pedaya lectured in February 2018 on "The 'Hokhma' Journeys in the Annals of Jewish Mysticism: a Literary, Historic, and Phenomenological Mapping."

International Relations

A major role of the Israel Academy is to promote and coordinate scholarly contacts between Israel and the international community.

USA - National Academy of Sciences

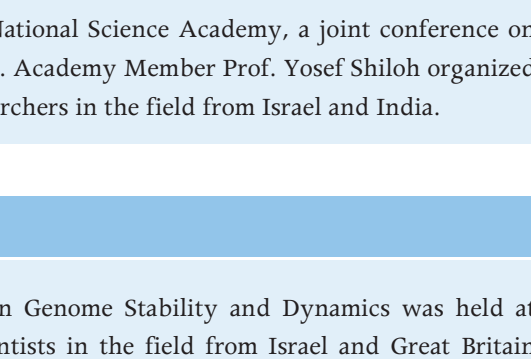


Israel Academy President Prof. Nili Cohen visited Washington D.C. in May and met with the President of the American National Academy of Sciences, Prof. Marcia McNutt. The meeting's purpose was to strengthen the bond between the academies and to discuss joint initiatives to increase collaboration between researchers in the two countries.

GERMANY - The German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina

Visit by the President of The Leopoldina

Prof. Jörg Hacker, President of The Leopoldina, visited the Academy in February and met with the Academy's Council members and former presidents. The visit took place as part of the collaboration between the academies, which includes joint workshops and scientific events on various topics, among them: chemistry, neurology, economy, and law. The participants in the meeting agreed to strengthen the academic bond between the two institutions.



Joint conference with the Leopoldina

The sixth bi-national conference with the Leopoldina, was held in May in Berlin, on the topic "From Synapses to Circuits in Health and Disease." Academy Member Prof. Yadin Dudai headed the Israeli delegation.

INDIA - The Indian National Science Academy

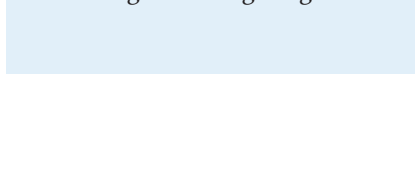
Based on a collaboration agreement with the Indian National Science Academy, a joint conference on Molecular Genetics was held in February in New Delhi. Academy Member Prof. Yosef Shiloh organized the meeting, whose participants included leading researchers in the field from Israel and India.

UNITED KINGDOM - The British Royal Society

A joint symposium with the British Royal Society on Genome Stability and Dynamics was held at the Academy in March. Twenty-four prominent scientists in the field from Israel and Great Britain participated in the symposium, along with dozens of research students from Israel. Thirty-two posters by young researchers were also exhibited. Academy Member Prof. Yosef Shiloh organized the meeting.

Visits by Representatives of Leading Scientific Institutions from Around the World

In the last week of May 2018, representatives of the Academy met with representatives of major scientific organizations from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Poland.



Dr. France Córdova, Director of the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), and additional officials of the Foundation and the U.S. Embassy in Israel met with Academy Members Prof. David Harel, Prof. Itamar Willner, Prof. Yadin Dudai, and Prof. Zehev Tadmor. Dr. Córdova presented the NSF's work and its relations with the U.S. government and stated the importance of the organization's link with Israel, including the United States - Israel Binational Science Foundation program.

Prof. Sir Steve Smith, Vice Chancellor of the University of Exeter and Chairman of Universities UK, visited the Academy. Sir Steve emphasized the importance of scientific relations between Great Britain and Israel and expressed his tremendous appreciation of Israel's scientific achievements. The British delegation brought up the issue of the boycott against Israel instigated by the BDS movement and stressed its sweeping objection to the phenomenon in general and to the imposition of any sort of ban.

Workshop Anticipating Renewal of the Agreement with the ESRF

The Academy held a workshop in March in anticipation of renewal of the agreement with the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF). Participants included Academy President Prof. Nili Cohen, Nobel laureate and Academy Member Prof. Ada Yonath, and the CEO of ESRF, Mr. Francesco Sette. Researchers from Israel and the ESRF, students, members of the Academy's Synchrotron Committee, and representatives of the Planning and Budgeting Committee of the Council for Higher Education also took part.

