

THE 40TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL BIBLE CONTEST FOR JEWISH YOUTH

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Sixty teenagers from 27 countries who had the highest scores in their regional Bible contests came to Israel in April to participate in the Annual International Bible Contest for Jewish Youth.

There were separate first-round contests for Diaspora youth and for Israelis. Among the contestants from the Diaspora, first place was taken by Joshua Laker of the Mesivta of New Jersey. (His sister Rachel placed second in last year's Diaspora contest.) Moshe Kurin from Canada and Morin Hadad from Belgium shared second place. In the first-round for Israeli youth, first place was taken by Neriah Klein of Jerusalem. The twelve contestants with the highest scores in the Diaspora and Israeli rounds then competed in the finals, held in Jerusalem on Israel Independence Day and broadcast live on radio and television. The winner was Moran Gomri of Beersheba, and she thus earned the title of *Kallat Hatanakh*. Neriah Klein came second, and Daniel Kirsh of Ginot Shomron third.

It can be stressed with pride that Israel is the only country in the world which celebrates its independence day not with military parades but with publically broadcast biblical and cultural events that honor the achievements of scholars, scientists and artists.

Contestants in the Bible Contest for Youth toured the country and met with the President, the Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Knesset. Prime Minister Sharon noted the eternal links of Jews to Israel, where many locales still have their biblical names, and that the Tanakh is the best tour guide to the country. He also stressed that for the Jews, Israel is not only their Holy Land but also their Promised Land, that God destined for them.

Jewish schools in the Diaspora are encouraged to have their students participate in their country's regional bible contests. Schools receive the list of biblical books or chapters on which the contest is based, and students may study and take exams in their own languages. For further information, contact your local Jewish Agency representative through <http://www.jafi.org.il>