

Israel President Prize for Literature Awarded to Author Amnon Shamosh

The Israel President Literature Prize for 2001 was awarded to authors Miron H. Isacson, Aharon Megeed, Ephraim Bauch and Amnon Shamosh.

Writer and poet Amnon Shamosh was born in 1929 in Halab, Aleppo. In 1938, he immigrated to Israel with his family. He studied at Gimnasia Herzliya in Tel Aviv and was a member and instructor in the youth movements known as: "Mahanot Ha'Olim" and "Hatnu'oth Hame'uhadoth".

In 1946 he joined the Hagana and was recruited to the Palmach, where he served in the Hachshara at Kfar Giladi. He fought in the War of Liberation. Together with fellow members from the Tnu'a, he founded Kibbutz "Maayan Baruch" on the Syrian Boarder. He was a teacher and school principal of "Emek Ha'Hula" Elementary and High School, and a member of the Kibbutz - where he still lives with his children and grandchildren.

Amon Shamosh went on Zionist and U.N. missions to Africa and Europe, and was active in the absorption of immigrants to Israel.

He is a graduate of the Beit Berl College for Joint Education and a graduate of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Hebrew Language and Literature and English Literature).

He commenced his literary activity at the age of 40. To date, he has published 17 books - including prose, poetry, drama, philosophical essays and research. He

moderates workshops in creative writing and is a sought-after lecturer in French and English speaking countries.

He is married to Hannah, nee Sukal, and father of two daughters, a son and 6 grandchildren.

The body of judges included Prof. Gabriel Moked, Prof. Aviva Doron and Prof. Ephraim Hazan, who explained their choice as follows:

Amnon Shamosh acquired a prominent place in the world of Hebrew literature thanks to his wonderful stories on Halab Jewry. Both his stories and poems genuinely reflect the unique spiritual heritage of the Jews and the Israeli-Oriental experience with its Sephardic roots.

In this framework, his novel "Michel Ezra Safra and Sons" portrays the picturesque Halab community, including the diversity of figures and qualities it depicts: distinguished Rabbis, shrewd merchants, landlords and common people. Even inter-family relations and the complex relations with Arab neighbors are artistically described by a sensitive writer with a scrutinizing and observing eye, depicting a very long heritage. Shamosh's deep love for his heritage and community, and through it for the Israeli nation, is evident also in his documentary book on Aleppo.

His prolific literary works and contribution to Israeli culture and Hebrew literature are a significant aspect of Israel's developing culture.

In light of all this, the body of judges decided to award Amnon Shamosh the President's Prize for Literature.



Shamosh family - Israel Presidents house