

Dr. Arno Motulsky Received 2009 Dr. Bernard Heller Prize at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Graduation Ceremonies in Cincinnati

Rabbi David Ellenson, Ph.D., President of the **Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR)**, announced that the 2009 Dr. Bernard Heller Prize was awarded to **Dr. Arno Motulsky**, Professor Emeritus in the Departments of Medicine and Genome Sciences at the **University of Washington**. The award was presented at the HUC-JIR/Cincinnati Graduation Ceremony on June 7, 2009, at Isaac M. Wise Temple, 8329 Ridge Road, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dr. Arno Motulsky is the “Father of Pharmacogenomics,” the role of genetic variation in the response to drugs.

Dr. Motulsky grew up in Nazi Germany, which he left in 1939, although he did not make it to the United States until more than three years later. When he was 15 years old, he boarded the S.S. St. Louis, along with his mother, brother, and sister. The ocean liner sailed from Hamburg to Cuba, but was turned away in Havana Harbor after the Cuban government canceled the transit permits of most of the 1,000 refugees on board. The ship returned to Europe, where Dr. Motulsky's family was given asylum by Belgium. After a year in Brussels, the family received their American visas, but Belgium was taken over by the German army before they could leave. Dr. Motulsky was sent to a succession of internment camps in France before he was able to renew his American visa. Ten days before his 18th birthday, Dr. Motulsky was able to cross into Spain, then Lisbon before he finally arrived in Chicago.

Drafted by the United States Army when he was 20, Dr. Motulsky was placed into a special program to train army doctors. The army sent him to Yale and later medical school. He became involved in genetics after studying with the hematologist Dr. Karl Singer in Chicago. He began to study hereditary blood diseases.

In 1957, after publishing an article reporting that two drugs had negative interactions with enzymes produced by certain genes, he wondered if the same might be true of other pharmaceuticals. His question set off a revolution in research.

Dr. Motulsky is currently involved in assessing the role of genetic polymorphisms in resistance and susceptibility to disease from environmental agents. He studies the social impact of human genetics and has participated in various national committees dealing with these issues. He has been elected to the **National Academy of Science (NAS)**, the **Institute of Medicine of the NAS**, the **American Association of Arts and Sciences**, and the **American Philosophical Society**.

Rabbi Ellenson said, “Dr. Motulsky, a loyal son of the Jewish people, is an inspiring scientist whose life is fashioned by powers of observation and the tenacious devotion to research. In the course of his life's journey, he has been nourished by the most human

experiences which have marked his creative energies. His personal gifts of mind and heart have earned him extraordinary gratitude and respect.”

Ruth O. Freedlander, Co-Trustee of the Dr. Bernard Heller Foundation, will present the prize. The Dr. Bernard Heller Prize in Arts, Letters, the Humanities, and Religion is an international award presented to an organization or individual whose work, writing, or research reflects significant contributions in these areas. Previous recipients include Dennis B. Ross, Special Middle East Coordinator in the U.S. Department of State; Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke, chief negotiator of the Dayton Peace Accords; Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat, Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Treasury and advocate for Holocaust restitution; Count Folke Bernadotte, posthumously, for rescuing thousands in the concentration camps during the Holocaust; and Shimon Peres, President of the State of Israel, for his exemplary leadership, wise statecraft, and moral leadership for over sixty years.

The Dr. Bernard Heller Prize was established by the Co-Trustees of the Dr. Bernard Heller Foundation to honor Dr. Bernard Heller's memory, life, and belief in the Jewish tradition. Dr. Bernard Heller was ordained at Hebrew Union College in 1949, served on the faculty as Visiting Professor of Jewish Ethics and the Philosophy of Religion at HUC-JIR/New York, was the Director of Restitution of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., the agency charged with the restitution of cultural property seized by the Nazis from European Jewry and Jewish institutions, and served the only liberal Jewish congregation in India, the Progressive Union of Bombay. Dr. Heller pursued his interests in business as one of the founders of the predecessor to the United Brands Corporation and the West Indies Investment Company in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

For more information on the HUC-JIR Graduation, Investiture, and Ordination ceremonies in New York, Los Angeles, and Cincinnati, please visit <http://www.huc.edu/newspubs/pressroom/article.php?pressroomid=271>.

View the national invitation for event details:
<http://www.huc.edu/external/email/09/03/graduation/>

Founded in 1875, **Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion** is the nation's oldest institution of higher Jewish education and the academic, spiritual, and professional leadership development center of Reform Judaism. HUC-JIR educates men and women for service to American and world Jewry as rabbis, cantors, educators, and communal service professionals, and offers graduate and post-graduate programs to scholars of all faiths. With centers of learning in Cincinnati, Jerusalem, Los Angeles, and New York, HUC-JIR's scholarly resources comprise renowned library and museum collections, the American Jewish Archives, biblical archaeology excavations, research institutes and centers, and academic publications. HUC-JIR invites the community to an array of cultural and educational programs which illuminate Jewish history, identity, and contemporary creativity and which foster interfaith and multiethnic understanding. Visit us at www.huc.edu