

AMIR OR is a poet, translator, and editor. He is the author of seven volumes of poetry, as well as *The Song of Tahira* (2001), a fictional epic in metered prose. His poems have been published in more than 30 languages, as well as in eight volumes published in English and other European languages (see publications list). Or has participated in many international poetry festivals and conferences; and been a guest writer at several cultural institutions, among them the Literarische Colloquium Berlin, and Nihon University, Tokyo. For his poetry he has been awarded the Prime Minister's Prize, the Bernstein Prize and a Fulbright Award among others; as well as Fellowships from the University of Iowa, the Jewish-Hebrew Centre of the University of Oxford, The Literarische Colloquium, Fundación Valparaíso, the Heinrich Böll Foundation and others. His later poetry books include *Day* that takes its cue from and interprets the Jewish Prayer book, and the bilingually written *The Museum of Time*, consisting of mental pictures and the species memory.

Or was born in Tel Aviv 1956. His grandparents have emigrated from Poland in the 1930's and came to Israel as Zionist pioneers. He is descendant of a renowned Rabbis dynasty, among them Elimelech of Lizhensk and Rashi. Or studied in the Herzliya Hebrew High School, and after his army service dwelt in Kibbutz Nachshon. In his twenties he has worked as a shepherd, a builder and a restaurateur, and lived for a few years in the Netherlands and India, where he has studied various spiritual techniques. After returning to Israel he founded a meditation and therapy centre and a spiritual commune in Jerusalem. He studied philosophy and Comparative Religion in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, received his M.A. degree summa cum laude, and later lectured on Ancient Greek Religion.

In 1987 Or published his first book, *I Look Through The Monkeys' Eyes* for he was awarded the Harry Harshon Literary Prize of the Hebrew University. His books *Faces* [1991], *Ransoming The Dead* [1994], *So!* [1995] and *Poem* [1996] were soon to follow. In the 90's he has published numerous papers,

articles and essays on literature, society, theology and the classics, and has worked as a columnist in *Ha'aretz* daily. He has also translated poetry and prose from Greek, Latin, English and other languages, and his publications included *The Gospel of Thomas* (1992), *Limb-Loosening Desire - An Anthology of Erotic Greek Poetry* (1993) and *Stories From The Mahabharata* (1998). With his former wife Akiko Takahashi he has also translated books from Japanese, including *To a Woman* by Shuntaro Tanikawa (2000). For his translations from ancient Greek he received the Honorary Prize of the Israeli Minister of Culture.

In 1990 Or founded with Irit Sela the Helicon Society for the Advancement of Poetry in Israel. In 1993 he set up the Arabic-Hebrew Helicon Poetry School and developed the school's pioneering integrated methodologies in a series of subjects. The Helicon system covers: self-editing, basics of poetics, poetry in translation, reading poetry aloud. In these years He has worked as Editor-in-Chief of Helicon's journal and series of poetry books. He has also edited other literary journals and several anthologies of Hebrew verse in European languages. In 2001 he founded the annual week-long programme of the Sha'ar International Poetry Festival [SIPF] and has been its Artistic Director since then. Or is a founding member of the European Network of Creative Writing Programs and serves as national coordinator of the U.N.-sponsored Poets for Peace.

In 2005 Or returned to his original family name, Aviel, and added it to his surname, but continued publishing his works as Amir Or. In the mid 90's he returned to Tel Aviv where he lives with his partner and his son.