

Acceptance Speech, ICS Gold Medal, February 13, 2018, David

Continental Hotel, Tel Aviv

- **Thank you Udi.** The Israeli Chemical Society is fortunate to have you as President.
 - I am deeply **touched and humbled** by this recognition of my scientific work, and wish to say a few words:
 - One's career is a **mosaic of influences**. I want to share with you some pieces of this mosaic that I was able to dig from memory .And let me start with my teachers:
 - **Tanchum Hershmann** was my teacher in elementary school. Every Friday, he would stop teaching and would tell us one episode from the **Voyages of Odysseus**.
 - Hershmann was **a captivating storyteller** and to this very day I can vividly picture Odysseus **tied to the mast** so he could hear the beautiful singing of the **sirens** but **not jump** into the sea, as many did before him.
 - I think, this everlasting impression **made me a storyteller, who tries to shape his papers so they tell a story to an invisible audience**
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- **Nick Epiotis** was my PhD adviser who taught me to question everything.
 - I still see him standing in front of us, **clenching his fist and saying at the top of his voice**: “Look! I am holding these data in my hand. Now I toss the data into the air, and they fall on my desk and give a **NEW ORDER**”.

- In all my **500-or so papers**, I still toss data in the air trying to generate new order.

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- From my great teacher **Roald Hoffmann**, I learned the **painstaking process** of understanding **every and each** detail.
- His writing style, which is free from the rigid scientific-format, has taught me to recount my own stories in **a language that connects to my excitement with the science**.
- From his interactions and argumentations with fellow scientists, I learned that you must conduct your argumentations with dignity, **but with respect** to the other – in the best of our Talmudic tradition. (2 min)

- **My parents** came to Israel as refugees in the Iraqi-Exodus. They were **defeated by the hardships** of establishing new life here.
- Yet, ... **these defeated people were the turbo engine that pushed my brother and I into academic learning**.
- My late father **Saleem** was a gifted storyteller who used to tell us every night an episode from the **Bedouin Epic of Antar and Abla**.
- My late mother, **Nad'ima**. She used to paint. One day I asked her "*how do you start a painting?*" She answered "**I see the image on the page**"

- This magic infused in me by my parents influenced **my desire to infuse my own scientific writing with the magic of chemistry.**

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• **And then there were friends:** I was fortunate to meet colleagues with complimentary skills, and to forge together **everlasting friendships and productive collaborations.** Addy Pross, Philippe Hiberty, Helmut Schwarz, Walter Thiel, and **last but not least**, Yitzhak Apeloig.

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• **My many young coworkers**, postdocs and students, **enriched my scientific horizons** and caused me to **venture** into areas **I might have skipped had I been by myself.**

• **Finally but essentially: my wife Sara the rock of my life who kept the mast on course...**

• Science has been good to me, and **I have been fortunate my friends...**

Thank you all!