

# Rabbi Yaakov Epstein

Rabbi Epstein is an excellent and humble talmid chacham, a senior halachic researcher at the Torah and Land of Israel Institute, and author and editor of many Torah books and articles. He is a member of Kibbutz Sa'ad, and the grandson of the well-known Talmudic scholar Prof. Yaakov Nahum Epstein. After a lengthy military service, Rabbi Epstein studied for many years at the Merkaz Harav Yeshiva, after which he went to study and teach in the Atzmona settlement in southern Gush Katif. After the Disengagement, he went with some of Atzmona residents and re-established the town of Shomria in the Lachish region in the northern Negev, where he lives to this day.

Rabbi Yaakov Epstein is deserving of the Katz Prize for his life's work in halachic research, and for being a role model to Torah scholars who are seeking to practically apply the Laws of Eretz Israel in the Land of Israel. Among the dozens of books that he edited and published, his 25 volume Chevel Nachlato Responsa series stands out for its wonderful content. Many of his responsa are original and deal with how halachah connects to our modern lives and to the realm of the evolving scientific world. His shakla v'tarya are original and interesting and his halachic rulings are courageous and humble.

Rabbi Epstein is involved in researching such scientific subjects as the blue dye used with the tzitzit, the times of sunrise, sunset and nightfall, calculating the calendar, using cannabis on Shabbat, operating an electric pump on Shabbat by means of a groma, cooking water in solar-fueled alternatives, determining if the Silkie rooster needs an established tradition to be kosher, secretarial authority to impose fines on corona violators and more.

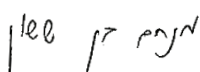
Since he is deeply involved in co-operative and communal village life, he deals with new questions that have arisen in our generation concerning this venue, such as the question of splitting the one synagogue in a village into two, whether multiple minyanim will cause a community to splinter, and whether an antenna may be attached to a synagogue.

As a researcher at the Torah and Land of Israel Institute, he deals extensively with the subject of mitzvos that apply to the land and agriculture, such as whether it is permissible to make compost from orlah fruits or from the remains of fruits with kedushat Shvi'it, laws of grafting vegetables and other complex questions.

Rabbi Epstein's books are innovative and original. He arrives at rulings on timely issues from a perspective of the Torah.

Rabbi Epstein has created a wonderful model of how to integrate halachah with modern life and a special way to view science and society in the light of halachah.

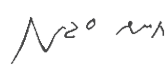
**For all these achievements, the committee found it appropriate to award Rabbi Yakov Epstein the 5782-2022 Katz Prize.**



Professor Menahem Ben-Sasson



Rabbi Shlomo Dichovski



Rabbi Haim Sabato