



Mishpatei Eretz Institute

The eternal springs of the Torah of Israel are the source of life throughout the generations. The important halakhic work, Shulhan Arukh, was written by Rabbi Yosef Karo in Safed close to five hundred years ago. One of the four sections of this major work, the Choshen Mishpat, deals with laws of judicial procedure, monetary issues, property damages, claims and counterclaims and all other matters connected with dealings between man and his fellow man. The Choshen Mishpat answers questions that are just as applicable today as they were when written, but in order to translate these issues to concepts that we can understand in this day and age, we require great Torah scholars with deep understanding and extensive knowledge of the Torah and of law. Mishpatei Eretz Institute enters the picture to translate obscure situations described in both the written and oral law into modern terms, such as repercussions of an ox goring a beast and splitting a disputed garment. It was for this exact reason that Rabbi Avi Gissar of the Ofra community set up the Institute- in order to explain and analyze Hebrew law in such a way that makes it accessible for us today and to present it logically before the Israeli public.

The Institute researches and interprets the Hebrew law with the goal of making it come alive and developing it in the modern State of Israel. The Rabbis at the Institute provide answers for halakhic questions that arise in modern law and advise and provide opinions for different organizations who wish to know what the halakha has to say about current topics. The Constitution, Law and Justice Committee of the Knesset consults with the Institute and involves it in their discussions in order to hear what is the stance of the Jewish law.

The Institute has researched many halakhic issues and makes its



practical conclusions known- in subjects such as drawing up a contract for the buying of real estate, wills and inheritances, agreements for splitting property between a couple and so forth. The team of Rabbis at the Institute draw up these contracts according to the Jewish law, in such a way that it is valid according to both Jewish and secular law and by doing so raise public awareness for the importance of signing contracts in accordance with Jewish law.

The Institute runs a court that deals with financial matters in order to solve neighborly disputes, disputes between buyers and sellers, disputes between contractors and tenants, and more. A group of esteemed scholars, led by Rabbi Dr. Itamar Warhaftig , accompany the Institute by learning and clarifying new issues through the Talmud and its commentators up until practical halakha. The members of the Institute are kept up-to-date with the secular law of the land, as well as international law, by some of the top jurists in Israel and in the world. Many publications are released by the Institute as anthologies and journals. The Institute has also released many books: Mishpatei Eretz - a question and answer book, Tzinat Adam – a clarification of the right to privacy through the prism of halakha by Rabbi Dr. Itamar Warhaftig, Etika Tzvait Yehudit by Elazar Goldstein and Ido Rechnitz, and more.

The Institute holds seminars and conferences for Rabbis and jurists in order to connect between Hebrew law and the law as it is today in modern Israel and around the world. Issues such as ethics and morality, laws of war and the status of the immigrant and citizen are analyzed and clarified in an environment of mutual respect and inspirational public discussion.

The Mishpatei Eretz Institute is headed by Rabbi Avi Gissar and a team



of Rabbis who work with him- they are all esteemed scholars, lovers of Torah and work in order to spread the Hebrew law and to make it accessible to the general public. They work in order to bring honor to the Torah and to incorporate it in day-to-day life. The Mishpatei Eretz Institute is worthy of all appreciation and honor for their effort to integrate halakha in modern-day life in the field of Hebrew law. In consideration of the above, the selection committee has decided to bestow upon the Mishpatei Eretz Institute the Katz Prize for 5777 (2017).


Professor Menahem Ben-Sasson


Rabbi Haim Sabato


Rabbi Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz)