

## Support for the Center for Arbitration and Mediation in Israel



Dayanim at the founder's meeting of the Board of Directors for the Center of Mediation and Arbitration in Israel. (L-R): Dayan Chaskel Solomon, Dayan Benzion Neshet, and Dayan Chaim Kohn (USA).

EDA KRAM

A prominent group of Rabbanim and lay leaders met on March 18 for the first meeting of a newly formed Board of Directors in support of the Center for Arbitration and Mediation in Israel. The meeting was hosted by prominent Jewish leader Mr. Phil Rosen at Weil Gotshal and Manges, LLP.

It has been over eight years since Israel's Supreme Court ruled that the rabbinical courts of the Chief Rabbinate had "no jurisdiction" over monetary disputes, thus leaving the country without a national network of *batei din* for *Choshen Mishpat* issues. Israelis of all backgrounds, whether secular or religious have beseeched Rabbanim and *Dayanim* to establish *batei din* throughout Israel in accordance with Torah and *halachah*.

The initiative to create the Center for Arbitration and Mediation was undertaken by prominent *Dayanim* Rabbi Chaskel Solomon and Rabbi Benzion Neshet nearly three years ago. Tel Aviv's Chief Rabbi Meir Lau is a member of the presidium of the Center, which quickly expanded to at least a half-dozen cities throughout Israel, including Yerushalayim, Tel Aviv, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Rishon LeZion and Kfar Saba.

Israel's Chief Rabbis and a cross-section of the rabbinic and political leadership throughout Israel support the Center. At conferences sponsored by

the Center, Rabbis, *Dayanim* and other public figures from all over the country attended, enthusiastically supporting the Center.

"You cannot imagine how many secular Israelis prefer settling their monetary disputes in a *beis din* rather in Israel's secular courts," Rabbi Neshet said. "They recognize that a process that is guided by Torah and the *Shulchan Aruch* is the best way to deal with monetary issues."

It is unfathomable that Israel of all places should not have an official rabbinical court for *Choshen Mishpat*," said marketing expert Mr. Menachem Lubinsky. "Who but our Torah set the standards for fairness and justice in mitigating business disputes?" he asked.

Yoram Hacoen, legal adviser to the Center for Arbitration, described the level of professionalism of the *batei din*. He said that the Center often consulted experts to properly adjudicate cases. He thanked Mr. Rosen for hosting the event and Mr. Baruch Klein for sponsoring the inaugural meeting of the Board.

Rabbi Solomon said that the Center needs to expand to other cities, embark on a broad educational campaign, train more *Dayanim*, and even establish a robust website to answer halachic questions for Israelis looking for guidance in accordance with Torah and *halachah*.

Mr. Rosen thanked the prominent group for attending this important event.

## Enjoying Israel in Your Second Home

NOAH F.

A growing number of Jews from around the world have fulfilled the dream — or followed their investment advisors — and bought a second home in Israel. While they are not in a position to live in Israel permanently, they have nevertheless taken the plunge and bought their very own slice of the Holy Land.

There are numerous benefits that come from owning your own home in Israel — from the ability to visit regularly and stay in your own "home away from home," to having a place where you can build memories and share family *simchos*. For some it's the idea of being in Israel for Yom Tov, without having to deal with hotels and eating in public dining rooms. For many, it's the simple joy of knowing that they own a piece of the Promised Land.

But while they have taken their first steps in this grand adventure, many are not aware of some new developments that can make owning and visiting their property in Israel a far more pleasant and rewarding experience.

Property managers have existed in Israel for a number of years now, but with the advancing economy and higher market expectations, a new breed has come into being. Sometimes called "concierge property managers," they offer a range of services that go over and above the traditional property manager role.

Property management services have traditionally included: caring for your place while you are away; coordinating cleaning, repairs or renovations; ensuring your property is kept in good condition; and managing renters to enhance your return on your investment.

Concierge property managers, however, provide extra services, including: preparing for your arrival (for example, filling the refrigerator with groceries, organizing transportation from the airport and purchasing pre-paid local phone SIM cards), helping plan your stay (including organizing tours and rental cars, finding baby-sitters and restaurants to try, catering for events, and so on) and helping to make your visit a truly unforgettable experience (4 x 4 safari in the desert, rappelling in the Judean mountains, digging for archaeological treasures, winery tours, family *simchos* at the Kosel or overlooking the Temple Mount).

The aim of the concierge property manager is to provide the services of a 5-star hotel, while allowing you to remain in the comfort of your own "home away from home."

Mr. Avinoam Czitron, founder and CEO of Heartland, a boutique concierge property management company in Yerushalayim, has worked for a number of years in this burgeoning market. Several years ago, Mr. Czitron saw the opportunity to change the traditional paradigm of the property management business by merging the luxury hotel experience with the benefits of owning one's own home.

He recognized that while visiting Isra-

el provided the chance to experience the beauty and wonder of this ancient land, in the past that sometimes meant giving up on the hassle-free experience Westerners had come to expect. For those who went that one step further and purchased a home here, the difficulties due to bureaucracy, language difficulties and lack of local knowledge only served to increase the negative experience.

However, as the tourist market adapted to the more refined needs of its international visitors, the property management business still had room for improvement. And so Avinoam adapted his business to provide this hybrid model of standard property services, with that little bit extra at every turn.

While Avinoam is very private about his clients, it is clear that they are extremely satisfied, judging by their testimonials and their loyalty. Avinoam concierge service has managed to bridge that gap between private home and luxury hotel. Apparently his original clients are still his best customers and they have been his best promoters. In a business where word-of-mouth is the prime means of finding new clients, maintaining happy and loyal customers is the most important aspect of his business.

Avinoam does confirm that with different clients come very different needs. Prospective clients are looking for a range of services, from basic property management (at a more basic cost), to administrative and language help with the banks and the various government agencies, to the full service, all-inclusive personal concierge service. Some like the flexibility — full service when required, otherwise just the basics when not.

But what really sets this new business model apart is not the level of service. Rather, it's the loyalty that Avinoam himself has to his clients. Recognizing the immense level of trust they are placing in him in caring for their special and significant investment in Israel, Avinoam takes this responsibility very seriously.

But in return, he sees his responsibility to not only protect their financial investment, but to also preserve and support the aspirations that brought them here in the first place. Whether it was a lifelong dream of living in Israel, to a desire to be close to family living in the country, Avinoam recognizes that the ultimate service he can provide his clients is to see their wishes come true. And his mission is to try — wherever possible — to deliver that every time they visit.

When asked what sets his business apart from his competitors, his response is simple. "No matter what my clients want, my job is to help them as best as I can." But behind that is an unspoken promise — just as they have invested of themselves in Israel, he hopes their visits to Israel will reward that investment many times over.

For information regarding Concierge Property Services, contact Avinoam at [info@heartland.co.il](mailto:info@heartland.co.il) or call +972 54-790-3279.

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