

Institute Review Tishrei 5769, October 2008

Online courses in Universal Ethics to begin soon

The Institute for Judaism and Civilization Inc is now ten years old. It has established an international reputation for achieving a unique high level interface between the Torah tradition and the arts, sciences, professions and ethical concerns of general society. Its strongest specialization has emerged in researching and teaching universal ethics – known also as the Noahide laws – at the root of the world cultures. After the American President and Congress in 1991 endorsed the Noahide laws as the “bedrock of society since the dawn of civilization”, the next major continental head of State to do so was the Australian Governor General, Michael Jeffery, who in 2008 wrote, “I commend Rabbi Dr Shimon Cowen for...his commitment to promoting discussion of the Seven Noahide laws. These laws, or ethical principles, apply to all contemporary issues...”. For details of the courses and registration see www.ijc.com.au/courses



Rabbi Dr. Shimon Cowen together with the former Governor General of Australia, Major General Michael Jeffrey

New staff at the Institute

Rabbi Chaim Cowen has joined the teaching staff of the Institute. Following tertiary studies in Australia, the US, Israel and South Africa, he received his Rabbinical ordination from the Ariel Institute in Israel and the Chief Rabbi of Haifa, Rabbi S. Y. Cohen. Apart from studies in religious law and philosophy, he has a strong interest in the application of universal ethics to psychology, especially the school of Viktor Frankl, logotherapy.



Rabbi Chaim Cowen

Universal ethics and Australian and Israeli politics

Over the last year much discussion has been held between the Institute and politicians in both the Victorian State and Australian Federal Parliaments, interested in the universal ethics of the Noahide laws. The Institute was asked to submit briefings on various questions before Parliament and on 18 June held a forum on “Universal ethics, religious tradition and society” with representatives of different parties in the Victorian Parliament. Some weeks later a forum was held by the Institute in Israel, with a former justice of the Israeli Supreme Court, a former deputy attorney general of Israel and the founding dean of the Law School of Bar Ilan University on “Israel, the Noahide laws and the conflict of Cultures”

Institute Research

In the last 12 months, the Institute has published several issues of the Bulletin in the Noahide laws” containing research into the concrete ethics of the Noahide laws in relation to the prohibition on killing, and in relation to human sexuality. It published several analyses of legislation before the Victorian Parliament on abortion, relationships registers, and IVF legislation. It also published the second volume of “Interface” reporting its forums with leading Australians, including the chairman of the ACCC, Graeme Samuel, and the consultant to the last Federal Government on its values in schools project, Professor Brian Hill. See www.ijc.com.au/personalities-institute

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 Convenor, Seminars, course and projects in the interface of Judaism with the arts, sciences, professions and values of general civilization.